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ANIMATO!

The Animation Fan's Magazine

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ANIMATO!

The Animation Fan's Magazine

Publisher-torial

During a lively discussion on the relative merits of network television, a friend claimed he would "die without cable television." Hmm. His anguish-filled declaration made me look back at my childhood, and consider television's impact during my formative years. I realize now that I was a lucky kid. My parents didn't purchase a television until I was eight years-old. Prior to that, my primary entertainment was Saturday morning radio, Sunday comics, movies, and my parents. My two brothers, my sister and I would listen quietly for hours as Mom read stories. At bedtime, Dad kept us spellbound with his original narratives about a little boy, two goats and a brave Indian warrior. Television? Big deal!

Two films made a big impression on me at this time. My mom took me to see *War of the Worlds*, and tried to shield my eyes from the "horrible" scenes. I loved it. My Aunt Kathleen took me to a "new" Disney animated film, *Lady and The Tramp*. I was hooked. The rat in the nursery was the scariest moment I'd ever seen on film. For years to come, I wondered why all films weren't animated.

When we finally did get a television, Gene Autry and Roy Rogers were my idols. Even now, forty years later, I still have a soft spot for these wonderful western heroes. But now, the man I most emulate is my father, the real hero of my childhood.

You're probably wondering what all this nostalgia has in common with Nineties cable television. Well, in a word, parents.

Parents are supposed to be the main influence in a child's life. Not Beavis and Butt-head. In our modern age, children are literally bombarded with all types of diversions and entertainment. After tragic or near-tragic accounts of fires started by five year-olds, the news media quickly points out two animated morons as the causes. The question I would ask is this: Why are animated idiots the main influence in a child's life? Television sets come with on/off switches. Parenting doesn't have an "off" switch. You can't switch off the responsibility of raising a child and give it to someone else.

Beavis and Butt-head aren't the problem. The moronic duo are, however, a weather vane. And MTV knows which way the wind blows. I think MTV panders to the short-attention span, instant gratification generation by promoting Beavis and Butt-head. These cartoon clowns are a symbol which re-enforces crude and rude behavior in a target audience that doesn't get the satire.

Write to me. Try to convince me.

For the record, I don't believe in censorship. I do believe parents should wake up and take control and responsibility of their children's education. It starts in the home, not at a network office.

Tell me I'm wrong. Until then, I'm going to believe Beavis and Butt-head are guilty of nothing.

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Young Readers' Page

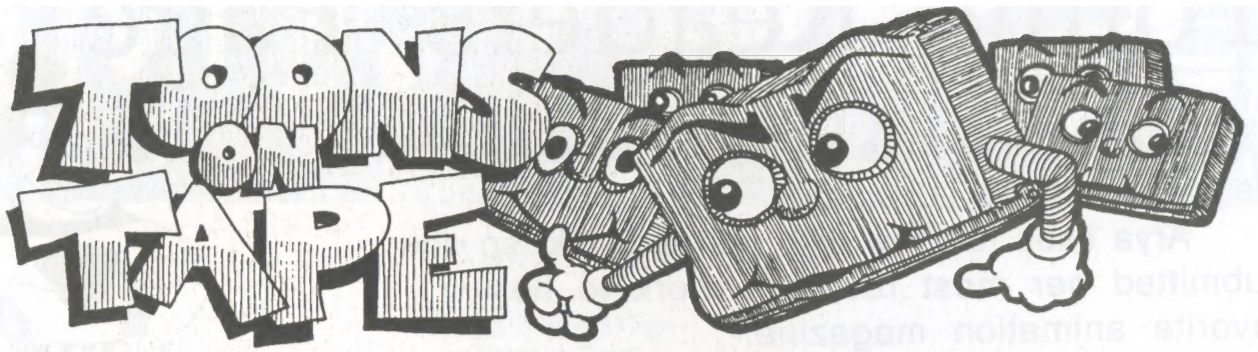
Ten year-old Arya Shekar of Worcester, MA is our youngest subscriber.

Arya likes to draw with pen and ink, so she submitted her most recent artwork to her favorite animation magazine.

The **ANIMATO!** Young Readers' Page is open to young artists. Send your submissions to **ANIMATO!**, 17 Spruce St., Springfield, MA 01105.

Arya Shekar

Arya Shekar



By Eric Walker, Jay Pennington and G. Michael Dobbs

History of Animation, 55 minutes
Willis O'Brien Primitives,60 minutes
Attack of the Cohl Pumpkins, 60 minutes
Available from A-1 Video , P.O. Box 8808, Michigan City, IN, 46360
All are $15.00.

A-1 Video is an independent video company, and its speciality is early silent cinema. The source material for the company's tape include both 8mm and 16mm prints of public domain subjects. If you're interested in silent Laurel and Hardy, Mack Sennett, Hal Roach comedies or pre-World War I Griffith films, A-1 is one of the few companies which regularly present this kind of film. For the fantasy fan, A-1 also carries three collections of Georges Melies films, and a volume of "trick" films from the Pathe Freres. Animation fans can witness the birth of the medium through three tapes, *History of Animation*, *Willis O'Brien Primitives*, and *Attack of the Cohl Pumpkins*. The first tape features some of the films by J. Stuart Blackton, including one of the first animated films, *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*. After watching this tape, one realizes that so much of the techniques of animation were discovered very early in the development of motion pictures.

The Willis O'Brien Primitives is a collection of the animated shorts O'Brien did at the Edison Studio. Some stop motion fans might be disappointed to learn that these films are fairly standard slapstick outings with most of the footage dedicated to animated cave people, instead of the dinosaurs! The animation is amazingly smooth in many sequences, though, and the model work, although certainly primitive, is ingenious. The tape ends with an very odd sound short which uses silent footage from *The Lost World* .

The early work of Emile Cohl, another animation pioneer is featured on the third tape, although most of the tape is actually a collection of some of the very first motion pictures produced by the Lumiere Brothers before the turn of the century. Cohl worked both in stop motion and in cartoon techniques, and his films have a wit and style which is not expected at this early point in the medium's development. Be aware that on this tape, some of the Cohl films have their original French inter-titles.

Of course, the question on all of these tapes is the quality of the source material. I'm not the sort of person who enjoys squinting at a 16th generation copy of something, but I certainly found the quality acceptable. One should keep in mind that many of these films were taken from their paper prints at the Library of Congress, or transferred from 16mm copies made from the original nitrate.

All in all, these three tapes represent a fascinating look at animation's beginnings.**GMD**

The Tune -1992 (1993 video release)
Triboro Entertainment Group
80 minutes

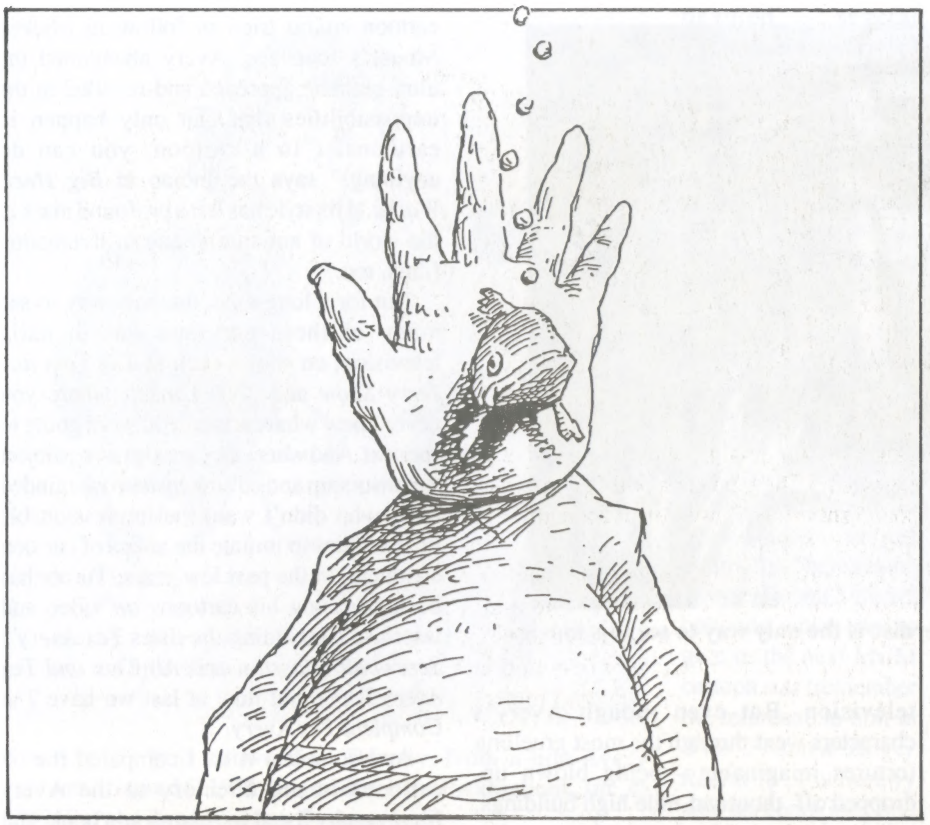
Writing something less than a greatly enthusiastic review of Bill Plympton's *The Tune* is practically an act of heresy for an animation fan such as myself. Plympton is one the few independant animators who has risen from the animation festival ranks to establish a name for himself outside of animation circles. His work on MTV and various television ad campaigns has given him the financial resources to tackle producing a feature-length animated musical.

The good news is that Plympton has remained very true to his unique technique. While his use of colored pencils is somewhat more polished here than on some of his shorts, it still has that distinctive rough and immediate style. His trademark transformations and cheerful sadism is also present in *The Tune*.

The problem is Plympton's transistion in going from short gag-oriented cartoons to a feature with a plot and sympathetic characterizations. *The Tune* is the story of songwriter named Del who is searching for a song. By taking the wrong exit off of a highway cloverleaf he winds up in the town of Flooby Nooby where bursting into spontaneous compositions is commonplace. This cheerfully surreal aspect of the film is wonderful. Generally, the songs are clever, and Plympton's animation is a delight.

Where the film has difficulties is several scenes in which the tone changes. Del and his girlfriend may be breaking up because of his inability to write. Del reveals he really didn't love her, but was using her to get to her boss, the owner of a music publishing house. This somber plot-line seems truly out of place. It's very difficult to blend a melodramatic plot with surreal slapstick, and I don't think Plympton pulls it off.

Despite my reservations, though, *The Tune* is an example of totally original filmmaking, as opposed to Disney clone features (such as the sugary Hanna-Barbera's *Once Upon A Forest* and Filmation's Snow White rip-off *Happily Ever After*) , and is well-worth your time. As an added bonus, a "making-of" short follows the feature. **GMD**



An image from *The Tune*.

The Castle of Cagliostro 1980 (1992 video release)
Streamline Pictures 100 minutes

If your exposure to Japanese animation has consisted of either the high polish of Akira or the numbing repetition of any number of space operas, this 1980 Japanese animated feature will be a pleasant discovery. For once while watching an English translation of Japanese animation I didn't get the sense I was missing something!

The Castle of Cagliostro is the story of a master thief named Wolf who becomes involved with restoring the rightful heir to the throne of a tiny European nation named Cagliostro. Unlike most American animated features which have plots which can be easily described in a few sentences, *The Castle of Cagliostro* doesn't. I certainly have never seen another animated feature before which artfully mixed a gentle parody of Sixties caper movies with a plot concerning a royal family which has been controlling the world's economy for generations by printing counterfeit cash!

Adventurous, and funny, *The Castle of Cagliostro* is a film which kids will like, but won't bore an adult. **GMD**

Fantasia
(CAV, $99.95 Disney)

Okay, it's officially "unavailable" for the rest of this millennium, but how many copies have you seen stacked up in dusty corners of video stores begging for a buyer? (Maybe if they'd discount the price a little....)

While the CLV version of Fantasia is certainly a joy to watch, if you don't get it on CAV you're missing a lot. I know, price is no small factor, but the freeze-frame feature is the chief delight of this laserdisc. And, of course, the restoration has provided us with a gorgeous print to enjoy. The last (CLV) side of the box set features the first reissue trailer and a somewhat educational documentary that doesn't suffer too badly from syrupy Disney self-hype. (At least an animated character doesn't appear with the live-action narrator.) I would've liked a more in-depth look at the restoration, though, which is pretty much breezed through here. The box set claims to present the film in its "original 1/1.33 aspect ratio", which would suggest it was matted, but this is not the case. Apparently, they're either trying to point out that the original ratio is comparable to your TV, or just outright deceiving us.

A word of caution about this being "how it was meant to be seen", for this version, while restoring much that has been excised in previous releases, still omits the potentially offensive black centaurettes carrying Dionysius' cape (or whatever it was they were doing—I wasn't around in 1940 to take notes). Moreover, claims that they've "restored Fantasound to its original brilliance" and other such nonsense are pure hype. As the press kit for the 1990 re-release states, (and I find it interesting this has been admitted on no other occasion), the original multi-track Fantasound recordings have not existed since the Fifties. The press kit goes into great detail on how, around 1955, these aging tracks were played simultaneously *over the phone* to a then-modern magnetic recorder in another building that recorded the entire soundtrack (including an annoying hum that existed in every re-release after that until the recent restoration managed to filter it out). Since this recording was naturally monaural, the "stereo" sountrack in today's "restored" version is nothing more than a modern engineer panning the sound back and forth between left and right channels, which becomes very annoying. (Whenever listening to the new soundtrack CD's or watching the movie I push the "simulated stereo" button on my stereo just to knock it back to mono.) Sure, I'd love to hear the original Fantasound, but until someone finds it in Ub Iwerks' garage or something, give me mono!!

Bottom line: CAV version a must for fans of the movie; CLV version a must for Disney fans in general; Disney haters—avoid at all costs! **Jay Pennington**

The Compleat Tex Avery.

Early last year, Ted Turner released a deluxe five-disc set of 70 pre-1948 Warner Bros. cartoons sporting a $100.00 price tag and the title, *The Golden Age of Looney Tunes*. The public's response to this boxed set took Turner by surprise; sales were so good that the folks in charge of the laserdisc pressings quickly prepared two more Looney Tunes packages, labelled as Volumes Two and Three of the Golden Age package. I didn't bother buying them because I've seen

For Disney fans, *Fantasia* on laserdisc is the only way to see this movie. (© MCMXL Walt Disney Productions)

all of the 1940s Looney Tunes on TNT, videotape and other sources, and I felt the discs contained many cartoons which really didn't interest me. I can live without owning every single Warner Bros. cartoon in existence, and not being able to see *Sniffles Bells the Cat* or *Have You Got Any Castles?* or *Elmer's Pet Rabbit* or *The Curious Puppy* won't make me lose any sleep at night.

However, Turner is now applying the"deluxe" treatment to the MGM cartoons. The latest in the cartoon-boxed-set line is a 67 cartoon $99.95 laserdisc collection of every single cartoon directed by Tex Avery at MGM with the title *The Compleat Tex Avery.*

Now, what do we say about Tex Avery that hasn't already been said? His influence on the art of animation is as great as Walt Disney's, although Avery's lack of a flair for self-promotion caused the public to pass him by. Avery was a shy, amiable person (see the interviews with Heck Allen and Michael Maltese in Joe Adamson's Tex Avery: King of Cartoons) who downplayed his own role, and preferred to remain anonymous when credit was handed out. So while Chuck Jones, Walt Disney and Hanna and Barbera are names known around their world, the true king of animation is known mostly among film buffs and animation fans.

Cartoons from other directors have been criticized as being too violent, and they're often censored on Saturday morning television. But even though Avery's characters went through the most gruelling tortures imaginable - being blown up, dropped off thousand-mile high buildings, split into innumerable pieces and any number of contortions - they always came through unharmed, and they almost never died. (When they did die, it was always offscreen.) Pain only lasts for the briefest of moments in an Avery cartoon, and the characters often did impossible things to avoid it. Adamson notes that Wile E. Coyote may be able to survive a five-mile drop down a cliff, but Avery's Wolf would develop brakes in mid-air to keep from hitting the ground. No pain. (Or as Avery might point out: no brain, no pain.)

And if that's not enough, there's the other aspect of Tex Avery's cartoons: they were made unquestionably for adults. His cartoons are often easily dismissed as "kiddie stuff," because like most cartoons of the 1940s they starred pigs and wolves and dogs and birds and bulldogs and sheep. But as we know, there's enough adult humor in his cartoons to make anyone look twice. *Red Hot Riding Hood* was so risque that it was banned from TV; it can only be seen on video. It certainly raised *my* eyebrows when Red Riding Hood appears on the dance floor stage, does a striptease and sings a song about "Daddy!"

Avery's insanity was contagious: it affected the art of animation as much as Walt Disney's penchant for realism. After every cartoon studio tried to follow in Mickey Mouse's footsteps, Avery abandoned the ultra-realistic approach and revelled in the impossibilities that can only happen in cartoons. ("In a cartoon, you can do anything!" says the Indian in *Big Heel-Watha.*) His style has left a profound mark in the world of animation, and in live-action films, too.

But for a long time, the only way to see many of these cartoons was in daily television, on shows such as *The Tom and Jerry Show* and *TNT Toons!*, where you never knew what cartoon you were going to see next. And where the cartoons were subject to censorship and editing by narrow-minded fools who didn't want the impressionable little kiddies to imitate the antics of cartoon charaters. In the past few years, Turner has been releasing his cartoons on video and laserdisc (including the discs *Tex Avery's Screwball Classics*, and *All This and Tex Avery,Too!*), but now at last we have *The Compleat Tex Avery.*

And compleat it is. I compared the 67 cartoons in the directory to the Avery filmography listed in Adamson's book, and it's completely accurate. Every single cartoon Avery made at MGM is here, including two cartoons in Cinemascope by Hanna and Barbera that were re-drawn to fit the widescreen after Avery left MGM in 1954; those cartoons are letterboxed on the disc. The toons are presented in chronological order, based on the date of release from *The Blitz Wolf* (first released on August 22, 1942) through *Cat's Meow* (January 25, 1957). Several cartoons shown on this disc have never been seen on television because of their politically incorrect or risque nature, but they're worth seeing nonetheless.

The discs are all in CLV, which is a minor disappointment, but having them in CAV would have doubled the size of the collection (and its price, no doubt), so I can live with it. The chapter stops are accurate, unlike some MGM discs; the pictures are crystal clear; and the sound is sharp. The cartoons fill up nine sides of five discs, though the box barely fits the whole package. More space would have been helpful.

There's also an insert that lists all of the cartoons, as well as including pictures of several of the theatrical posters. It's only a four-page insert, and the back page is a very brief history of Tex Avery's career at MGM

Tex Avery's best known star, Droopy, from a non-Avery cartoon. (tm and © 1992 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc. © 1992 Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.)

(it has a pencil sketch from Chuck Jones' book Chuck Amuck, too). The insert says very little, other than listing the toons. It's a pity more info on Tex's career wasn't included here. If you want more background information on the man himself, consult Joe Adamson's book which has been re-issued by DeCapo Press. But considering the high price of this disc collection, a little additonal information would have been nice.

It's interesting to see how the animation style of these cartoons changed over the years, and Avery's style changed with it. His early cartoons at MGM are beautiful, with all of the lush backgrounds and solid, three-dimensionally drawn characters that the animators could call into existence, but over time they became heavily influenced by UPA's artfully simplistic style of animation. Less effort on detail meant that less money had to be spent on animation (which Fred Quimby, who was known for being almost as lacking in a sense of humor as the executives at Warner Brothers, liked), and while this meant sacrificing realism, it allowed Avery to increase the frantic pace of his cartoons. They became faster, and this actually made them funnier. Avery often devoted several cartoons to variations of the same theme, and I find that *Deputy Droopy* is much funnier than *Rock-A-Bye Bear*, despite the latter's more lush animation, the gags in the former are faster, more insane and better-timed.

Of course, not every cartoon here is a genuine masterpiece. Some of them, such as *One Ham's Family* or *The Hick Chick* or *What Price Fleadom*, are just plain silly. There are the five Screwball Squirrel cartoons, which tried to give us the next MGM cartoon star (remember the reference to him in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* ?) . But Screwy was so obnoxious and offensive that his cartoons fell flat on their faces. Unfortunately, like the rest of Hollywood, there are several racist bits in these cartoons that can make the viewer wince.

But these disappointing moments are few and far between. And even Avery's very worst cartoons have moments that are genuinely funny. Several gags in the Screwy Squirrel cartoons are priceless (I love the box of "Assorted Swell Stuff to Hit Dog on Head!"), and when Avery hit his peak with such cartoons as Bad Luck Blackie or Lucky Ducky ("Technicolor Ends Here!") or *Ventriloquist Cat* or *TV of Tomorrow*, he gave us some of the funniest pictures ever made.

And most important of all: every single cartoon is funny. You've seen Avery's cartoons on television a thousand times by now, but these are toons that you will never, ever get tired of watching.

That's why *The Compleat Tex Avery* is worth having. Its high price means that only serious cartoon fanatics will shell out the cash, but those who do will not be disappointed. Unlike the *Golden Age of Looney Tunes* collections, this Avery collection is complete. You get everything in this one package, making this the definitive cartoon box set.

Heck Allen was credited as "writer" on many of Avery's cartoons, although he's quick to point out that Tex did most of the writing, and nearly all the gags himself. He points out that Tex was a quiet man who didn't show off to get laughs with the people right there. He preferred to make anonymous people laugh, sitting in theaters 2,000 miles away and two years in the future. Considering this, I think he'd be flattered by this collection. One hundred dollars is a small price to pay for films that, 30 to 40 years later, are still making us laugh.

And they always will. Perhaps the best summary of the immortality of Tex Avery can be found in his last cartoon for MGM, *Cellbound*, as it ends with a statement that can describe Tex himself:

"You'll like this guy. He's crazy!"

Eric Walker

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Toon Collectibles: The Limited Edition Cel Market

by Paul Krempa

This is a new regular feature in which different writers address various aspects of collecting animation art and merchandise. It is ANIMATO's intention to stengthen the hobby of animation collecting by providing a forum for honest criticism and discussion. GMD

I've been collecting animation art for close to a decade, and have seen many of the cels that helped launch the limited edition market into the prominence it now holds. I'd like to take a look at the variety of Warner Brothers limited edition cels available on the market today. There are a number of different cels from different artists, and I'm going to try to sort out some of the features for the new buyers, the old penny-wise collector, or the avid animation enthusiast.

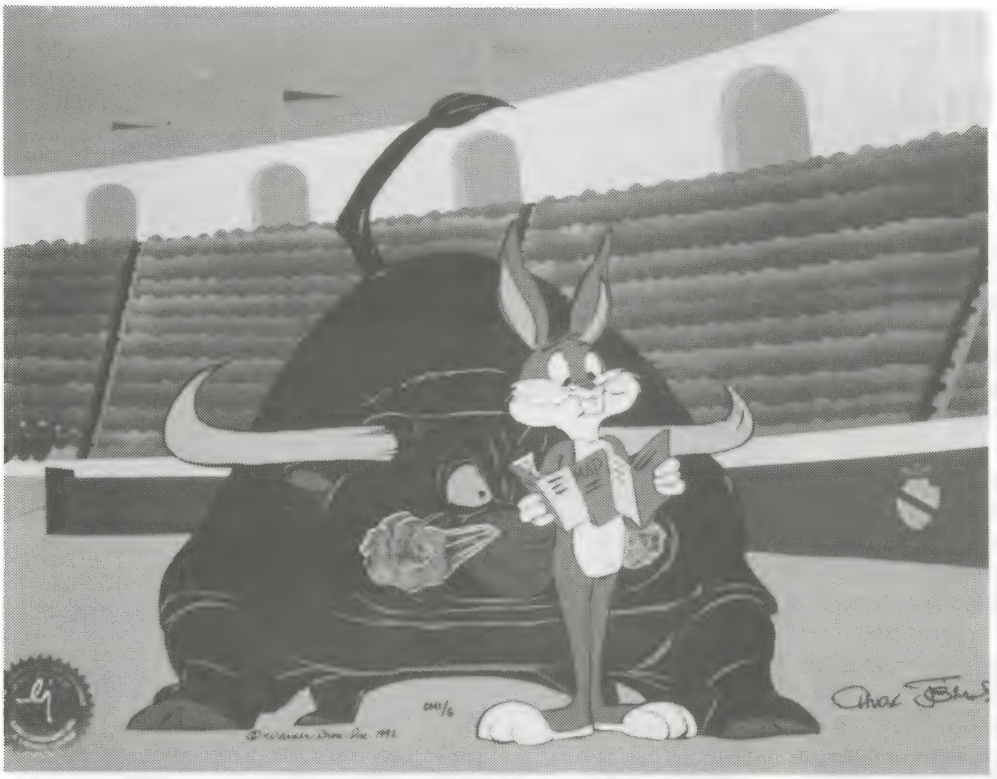
There are basically two reasons to collect limited editions. The first, because you like them. The second, because of potential investment value. To make collecting fun, it's best to have the first reason in mind, even if you're really interested in the second. Now I can't tell you what you like, but I may be able to give insights as to what the market has been bullish for.

In general, limited edition cels show the most significant increases in value on two occasions: when the edition sells out, or when a signee of a cel kicks the old proverbial bucket. Although it is potentially a better investment to have a signature, it is not necessary for collecting. Another question may concern the piece number. The secondary market has shown little discrimination. For example, a number 34/500 is valued the same as a 423/500. The numbers 1 or the final number in an edition may pose some intrinsic value although the market has shown little fluctuation.

Limited edition cels were originally created to fill the demand for collectibles, especially the rare Warner Brothers production pieces, at lower prices. The concept has taken off, and demand for limited editions is just as great as for production art work. As we arrive at this point in time, there are five major players in the limited edition market concerning Warner Brothers characters. They are Bob Clampett, Friz Freleng, Chuck Jones, Bob McKimson, and Virgil Ross. All the cels are signed by the animators, except for the Clampetts and McKimsons. Below is a brief review of each artist's work.

Bob Clampett - The Clampett editions are in my opinion the best-looking limited editions of the ones currently available. The drawings are Bob Clampett's originals from the cartoons. His daughter, Ruth Clampett, has also done a wonderful job of providing matching lithographic backgrounds that

One of Virgil Ross' limited editions. (© Warner Brothers 1993)



A 1992 limited edition, Bully for Bugs III, by Chuck Jones. (© 1992 Warner Brothers, Inc.)

accompany and enhance each cel. They are true to the form of the original cartoons, one feature many collectors look for. They are kept to an edition size of no more than 500, and employ seriography to ink the outlines on the newer pieces. Although not hand-inked, there is an extremely smooth feel to the outlines.

The only drawback future collectors may have is that these cels are not signed. The prices for the new editions range from $400.00 (for regular 12 field cels) to about $800.00 for the recently released title series (2 twelve field cels). The creativity of Bob Clampett seems to have been passed on to Ruth. She periodically markets cels which tread new water, such as the model series or the title series. The model series contains a cel of a character such as Daffy Duck matched up with a lithographic background of a model sheet of Daffy. They look simply magnificent.

The Clampett pieces have not gone up astronomically in value, but, all things considered (price, looks), they are the best-looking cels on the market that remain reasonably priced.

Friz Freleng - Well let me start off by saying that the different editions of the Pink Panther he has put out look great. Beautifully done, with great line work. Now on to the disappointing news. While his editions of the Pink Panther are wonderfully produced with a lot of character in each piece, many of his Warner Brothers editions lack much of this charm.

Don't get me wrong, there are some pieces which do look pretty good, but overall there is a feeling that they could be better. Many of the characters resemble the classic stars that Friz helped create, but few appear precise. The characters appear very stiff, not relaxed. Another complaint is the eyes. No matter where I stand while viewing his pieces, the characters seem to be staring all the time. Although his pieces do not have the charm of Clampett's or Jones', the investment value has shown to be significant. His limited editions have appreciated more than Jones', for two reasons: one, that his edition sizes were originally smaller, and two, that they debuted at a much lower price than Chuck's. The newer editions are now being issued in sizes up to 1200, larger than any of Chuck's, and are also priced close to Chuck's as well. They should still prove to be a good investment based on Mr. Freleng's legendary name that is signed on each cel.

Friz truly has had one of the most distinguished careers in animation, and his legend will only grow. He is one of the few animators who has had two distinct careers, one with Warner Brothers and another with DePatie-Freleng. The Freleng pieces are debuting as low as $600.00, many of his pieces are oversized, and all include Friz's signature.

Chuck Jones - Chuck Jones deserves credit where credit is due. Although he wasn't the first to put out limited edition cels, his art and the subsequent marketing certainly paved the way for future animators to become involved. Although the cels are not taken from older drawings, they are all marked with Chuck's distinctive style. The images are formed many times in the themes of some of his past great cartoons. Many non-animation buffs also relate to Chuck's style better than Clampett's. They are all signed by Chuck, and usually are created in sizes of 500, with a few exceptions. Along with the Freleng pieces, they have exhibited high investment value. He has created some pieces that relate to particular professions, such as doctors or lawyers. These may not be the best in terms of investment value since they may have future appeal only in those professions.

One aspect of the Jones editions I have heard complaints about is the thick and rough looking line work. This is part of Chuck's style, and is a feature of his discernable work. The newer editions are priced in the $600.00 range for a regular 12 field cel. These cels are all hand signed by Mr. Jones, which should add to the investment value.

Bob McKimson - I am including both Thomas and Charles McKimson's editions in the same critique with the editions being marketed under Bob McKimson's name. What I am about to say about the McKimson editions pains me. I've always loved Bob McKimson's cartoons, and think he was underrated as a director. I wish I could find as many positive aspects included in the limited edition cels as in his cartoons. Being a Foghorn Leghorn fan, I passed on Chuck's

and Friz's renditions hoping for the ultimate, a McKimson Foghorn. My wait was for naught. They aren't bad, they're just not, well for lack of a better word, good. They are mediocre, as are most of the McKimson editions put out. There are a few with Bugs which are eye catching, but still not outstanding.

Also available are a series of cels dealing with baseball. Different cels include different characters in different major league uniforms. I have one question to ask, WHY? There are hundreds of cartoons which could be drawn from. Why start with putting characters in sports uniforms? The sports pieces are signed by either Thomas or Charles McKimson, two Warner Brothers animators who have certainly earned mention in any animation history book. While this may add interest, it doesn't add any personality to the pieces. As far as investment potential is concerned, be cautious. For the same price range the Clampett pieces should prove to appreciate at a more generous rate.

Virgil Ross - These are newly released editions from the legendary animator Virgil Ross, whose credentials include animator for over 200 Warner Brothers theatrical shorts. The first three editions that were released were very unique in that they didn't have just one image, but rather a sequence of images on the same cel. This gave the illusion of movement. The most recent edition is a vertical pan cel of Sylvester and Tweety, not employing the sequence style as above. This, too, is extremely likable. This pose is taken from a newly created drawing, but recreates the old style better than any of the above artists.

Virgil is known for his expressionism, and it is evident in this cel. One look at Sylvester's weeping eyes, and you can really feel his nearing pain. These cels utilize hand-inking to produce a wonderfully smooth border to the image. The price starts at about $600.00 for a regular size cel. It's too early to tell of the future investment value, but initial response has been very positive. Backgrounds that enhance the scene are also applied. All are signed by Virgil. Although not as recognizable a name as a Jones or Freleng, Virgil is a legend of the animation industry, and his signature should prove to be a beneficial selling point. His name will be immortalized by appearing in the credits of *A Wild Hare*, as well as nine other Academy Award-nominated shorts.

To sum up all this information, The Jones and Freleng editions will prove to be the best in terms of investment value. I give the edge to the Jones' as long as he keeps his editions smaller than Friz's. The best-looking and most unique are the Clampetts. The Ross editions bridge both categories; they look great, and should prove to be a better investment than the Clampetts. The McKimson editions are in a separate category altogether. To the McKimson fans, like me, I say hang in there. I do admit I have a soft spot for the Clampett's and Ross', but it's only because they restore my vivid memories of the way the timeless cartoon classics look. One last reminder, most cartoons are created for fun and enjoyment. Try to keep this in mind when collecting. I use the investment potential as a justification for buying, but I don't think I could part with any of the pieces I own.

Paul Krempa is an animation collector and writer based in Schenectady, NY.

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Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince

by Marc Eliot
reviewed by Karl Cohen

Marc Eliot's controversial biography of Walt Disney explores an alleged connection between Disney and undercover FBI activities as revealed by Disney's FBI file. While not the first book to challenge the carefully-crafted Disney public image, (The Disney Version was the first nearly two decades ago), this book caused headlines with its revelations. Animation historian and critic Karl Cohen disagrees with Eliot's conclusions. GMD

Eliot's book reads like a tabloid newspaper. He took so many liberties with the truth the book should be sold as fiction.

Eliot may have assumed he had the only copy of Disney's FBI file, so he could fictionalize it to make the book more marketable. Having obtained a copy of the files several months ago for a research project, I was shocked to discover how Eliot distorted facts.

The author claims Disney began his career as a FBI spy on Nov. 10, 1940. A spy is generally somebody who is paid to go underground and collect information. There is nothing in the file to confirm this. Where would the head of a large animation studio find time to work as a spy? There is a newspaper article saying he was in Washington, DC for other reasons on that day, so that is the date Eliot chose for Disney to begin his fictitious career as a spy.

Eliot claims Disney left Los Angeles twice during WWII to go to New York to spy on left wing events. He then says Disney returned to Los Angeles, and filed reports on the events with the FBI. The FBI reports on the events were filed in New York, and not in Los Angeles as Eliot states.

Why would the FBI even ask Disney to go to New York when he would have no idea who was in the audience or backstage? A FBI anti-communist spy who lived in New York would recognize people his bosses were interested in.

Disney did support both events by sending money to their promoters. He was listed in advanced publicity as a sponsor, not as a speaker or guest of honor. A sponsor is someone who donates money. For example, many people sponsor friends who join walk-a-thons.

If you want further proof Eliot is capable of stating Disney traveled somewhere when he didn't, take the case of his claim that Disney went to Reno, and gave an "impassioned speech." The FBI file says Mary Pickford read a telegram sent by Disney to the Reno event. Eliot quotes what he claims to be part of the speech, but actually he quotes the entire telegram! He knew full well Disney didn't travel to Reno.

Eliot says other spies reported to Disney when he became a SAC-Contact in 1955, yet there is no proof of that, nor is there any indication what Disney did for the FBI. The only thing Eliot claims Disney did as a spy was to attend two cultural events in New York.

An educated guess as to what Disney did as a SAC-Contact was to provide the FBI information from his company's employment records, answer general questions about art and other subjects on which he was an expert, and/or tell them who to contact elsewhere when they had a question he couldn't answer. There is no reason to believe they ever paid him, or that he went underground to spy on anybody. Richard Nixon made Elvis Presley a drug officer, but does that mean Elvis busted drugs rings and turned in doctors who gave prescriptions to people with pill habits?

Eliot claims Disney left the FBI in 1956. If that were the case, why do FBI memos up until the time of his death in 1966 call him "a valued contact of this office?" One memo from 1960 requested that Hoover send "SAC-Contact Walt Disney" an autographed copy of his book, Masters of Deceit.

The errors regarding the FBI file go on and on. Some are sloppy recording of facts, while others appear to be outright untruths. The same lack of scholarship is also seen in other sections of the book. Many reviewers have noted that the book contains numerous events that nobody alive could have known about. Despite that, Eliot tells us what took place, how Disney felt and what was said in several private conversations that could not be known.

Howard Beckerman from ASIFA-East called me about a review I wrote for the *Society for Animation Studies*, and wanted to know if there was anything true in the book. He had found dozens of errors concerning basic facts about animation history, and wondered if other areas of the

book were just as sloppily written.

One of the many topics of which Eliot has no knowledge is his claim that Disney only hired women artists as inkers and painters. Disney didn't hire many women for creative jobs, but Mary Blair was an inspiration artist in the 1930s, (she developed images of what his films might look like when they were being planned), and Rhetta Scott rose in the ranks to become the first female animator at the studio. She was an animator on *Bambi* and other films. She left the studio during WWII, and later illustrated Disney children's books.

Stereotyped views of women before WWII dictated that they were expected to be mothers and housewives, or have jobs as nurses or teachers. Eliot forgets this, and seems to expect Disney to have contemporary attitudes about women in the work force. The late Rhetta Scott used to tell a story that in 1940, when the artists were getting ready to strike, a labor meeting was conducted in the work space next to her's. She asked them to keep it quiet as she was trying to work. Somebody yelled back, "go home and have babies." The comment came from somebody about to go on strike whom we would assume to be "politically correct."

If Eliot had stuck to the truth he would have written a much smaller book. I have talked to people who knew Disney, and still hate him for his politics and/or the way he ran his company. Disney was politically conservative, against the union organizing his workers, a member of a strong anti-communist organization, and he named three people as communists when he spoke to the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities in 1947. There were a lot of people who shared his views after WWII, possibly the majority of Americans.

No one I've talked with has ever offered proof Disney was a sexist, racist, Fascist, anti-Semitic, a heavy drinker, etc. as Eliot claims. Some people say they think some of the rumors are true, but they also say they have no proof that any are true. There are ugly rumors about Disney, just as there are unflattering rumors about other famous men. Neither Disney's detractors nor his friends confirm the rumors in Eliot's book are true.

Disney wasn't a saint. His problems dealing with his staff resulted in a major strike at the studio in 1941. This section of the book is informative and comes alive as the drama unfolds. It is the most exciting part of the book, and it seems to be accurate as he interviewed three of the strike leaders for his information.

Dr. Harvey Deneroff, an authority on the strike, said Eliot did a good job researching it, but he failed to stress how Disney tried to get union leader Willie Bioff, who headed IATSE, and had ties to organized crime, to take control of the strike and end it. Bioff went to jail shortly after the strike for unrelated reasons.

The sad thing about books like this is that they create fictional stories about people that will be passed on for generations, just as many people believe Disney's body was frozen at the time of his death. Did you know Elvis was seen on Feb. 30 in the Haunted House at Disneyland? If you want to read the book, I suggest you wait until it is remaindered.

Karl Cohen is an animation historian who recently contributed an essay to the June 1993 issue of *Film History*.

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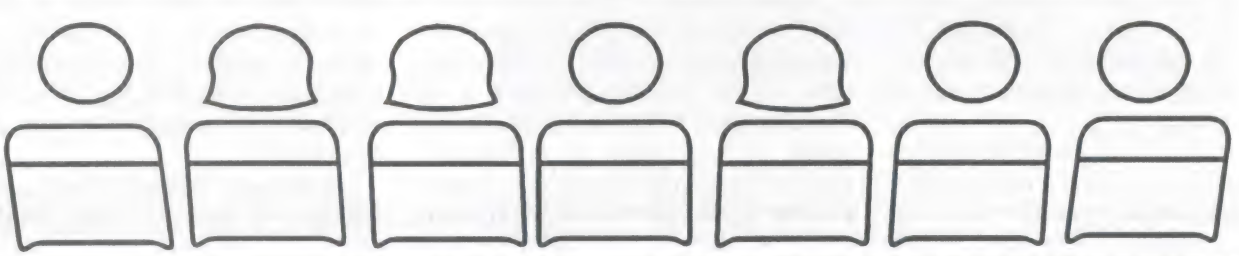


Milestone Releases Definitive *Lost World* and Winsor McCay Tapes

Professor Challenger's beloved Brontosaurus never before looked this good on videotape. (© Milestone Film and Video, Inc.)

Review by G. Michael Dobbs

I'm not sure what is worse for a film buff... reading glowing descriptions about films they can't see outside of an archives or paying for the right to develop eyestrain by attempting to watch scratchy, dupey prints or muddied video tapes. In animation, there have been certain titles that have been apparently doomed to these two situations. Long ago, I wanted to see bright, sharp prints of the Winsor McCay films, and I certainly wanted to see a complete version of Willis O'Brien's *The Lost World*. Now, after plodding through innumerable bad tapes of these productions comes the definitive video editions.

Milestone Film and Video has released not only *Animation Legend: Winsor McCay*, and *The Lost World*, but also a collection of films by pioneer model animator Wladislaw Starewicz entitled *The Cameraman's Revenge and Other Fantastic Tales*. These tapes will be available beginning Dec. 1, 1993, and will retail for $39.95.

In an era of low-budget cartoon shock animation and high-budget state-of-the-art computer generated puppet animation, one might wonder if animation fans who are not already familiar with these works will give them a chance. After all, will an unsuspecting viewer be tempted to journey to The Lost World, when he or she has already been to Jurassic Park?

Technically, Willis O'Brien's 1925 adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle's scientific romance is certainly primitive when compared with Speilberg's film. I'd hazard a guess, though, that without O'Brien's film, there wouldn't have been a *Jurassic Park*. What I like most about the film is its sense of wonder. In an era when species of animals were still being discovered and considerable parts of the world were still relatively unexplored, the magic of *The Lost World* is its "what if?" quality. Thankfully that attribute has not diminished with age, and still is very appealing to those of us who are armchair explorers.

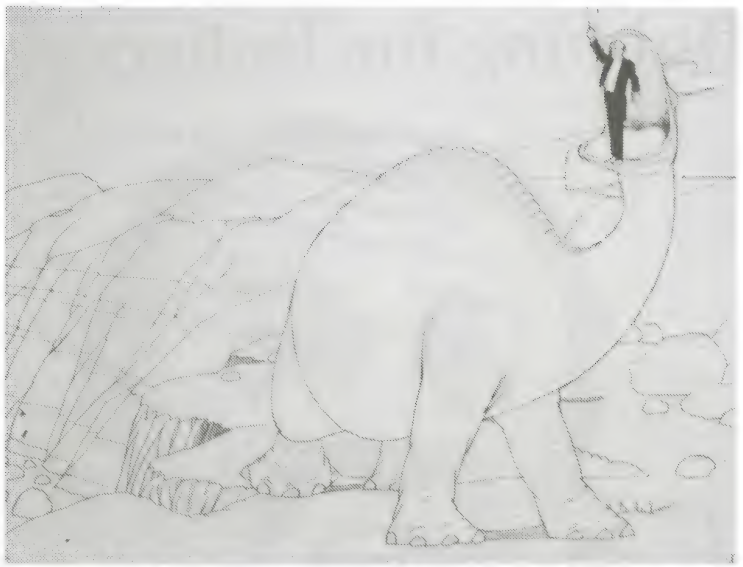
Long a subject for the public domain tape producers, *The Lost World* is presented here in its most complete version. All of the commonly existing versions of the film are based on the 16mm Kodascope prints abridged for the home market in the Thirties. The original film was quite a bit longer, and contained information which fleshed out the characterizations and several plot points.

Scott MacQueen (whose interview with Ray Harryhausen appeared in Issue 24) was responsible for this tape, which originally saw release as a LumiVision Laserdisc. MacQueen used footage from a number of archives to construct the most complete and best possible pictorial quality restoration. The film is also carefully tinted as it would have been in its original release..

At the end of the film, MacQueen constructs the missing footage through stills and the dialogue from the original intertitles. Here we see how the producers of the Kodascope print eliminated several key plot points, and shortened the expedition's journey through the Amazon rain forest to the Lost World. The character of Professor Challenger was definitely altered by the shorted version. With the additional footage, Challenger just doesn't appear as a single-minded eccentric academic, but rather as a somewhat sinister figure.

Film historians have long thought the Kodascope version lacked a dinosaur sequence. While I can't imagine why anyone would cut the very footage which makes the film so unique, nevertheless, MacQueen includes a description of the Brontosaurus poking his head through the window of a men's club, and disrupting a card game. How much of this scene was animated and how much involved the use of a full-scale Bronto head and neck model is not known. No stills apparently exist from the scene, although MacQueen did find a clipping from a magazine describing the scene with an illustration of stagehands holding a full-scale model.

Animation Legend: Winsor McCay (produced in association with LumiVision



McCay's collection not only includes a wonderful print of Gertie The Dinosaur, but also the unfinished sequel. (© Milestone Film and Video, Inc. Still courtesy of John Canemaker)

and the Cinematheque Quebecoise) is the only collection of McCay's films worth owning. For the first time on video that I've ever seen, not only are McCay's complete films featured, but his uncompleted projects as well. Using both 16mm and 35mm sources, this collection shows just how tremendous an animator this legendary comic strip artist really was.

It's been too easy for many animation fans to watch *Gertie the Dinosaur* and give McCay lip service as being a great animator. Now thanks to this collection, I think a lot of people will truly discover an animator whose contribution to the field is practically indescribable.

McCay never tried to maintain a production schedule such as his pioneering contemporary Emile Cohl. Animation was definitely a sidelight for him. His lack of total commercial dedication to animation, though, didn't prevent him from setting high artistic standards for the industry, and establishing the idea that animation could be used for everything from serious subjects such as his *The Sinking of the Luisitania*, to situation comedy (*The Flying House*).

The highpoints of this tape for me have to be opportunity of seeing McCay's unfinished films, *Gertie on Tour*, *Flip's Circus* , and *The Centaurs*. The Gertie footage has the same charm as the original, while *The Centaurs* has a wistful sort of sentimentality. While the animation on *Flip's Circus* is fascinating, one can't help but wonder just where McCay was going with the narrative.

McCay's weak points as an animator was his story sense and his timing. Too often, movements are repeated to the point of diminishing their affect. *Bug Vaudeville* and *The Flying House* are the best examples of this problem.

For many animation fans the real discovery of these three tapes will be *The Cameraman's Revenge and Other Fantastic Tales*. Wladislaw Starewicz, who first began his animation work in his native Russia before the fall of the Czar, is a true animation pioneer who has been unfairly overlooked. The first film on this tape, *The Cameraman's Revenge* , is a slightly sordid, but funny, tale of marital infidelity and revenge with animated insects. Starewicz used real insect bodies as his animation figures, and got some hideously life-like results.

Starewicz immigrated to France after the Russian revolution, and continued his filmmaking career there. Another silent offering on this tape is *The Song of the Nightingale*, a beautifully sentimental story of a little girl and a nightingale that masterfully mixes live action and animation. To top off the film, the entire short is handtinted with a precision that is truly astonishing.

His best known film, though, is *The Mascot*, a 20 minute short which rose to a certain prominence among modern audiences in the early Eighties when an excerpt received repeated airplay over the cable *Nightflight* program and through exposure on various public domain videotapes. This print of *The Mascot* is one of the best I've seen, and is complete.

The Mascot tells a story of love and devotion. A poor Parisian dollmaker struggles to make a living to support her daughter. While making a puppy doll, her tears fall into the stuffing, and the puppy came to life. The daughter would like an

Continued on Page 61

A scene from the 1912 production *Revenge of the Cameraman*. Many animations fans will discover the magic of Starewicz through the Milestone collection. (© Milestone Film and Video, Inc.)

U.S. Renditions: Dubbing for Dollars

by Bob Miller

"Dubbing Japanese animation is like old-time radio because you're creating the reality of it completely with your voice," says associate producer Robert Napton. "A lot of the performances in previous dub efforts have slighted that quality. They have only concentrated on making sure it syncs, and they forget that there's a vocal performance."

As newcomers to the animation dubbing arena, L.A. Hero and U.S. Renditions hope to maintain the vocal integrity of Japanese animation with a series of home videos: *The Guyver: Bio-Booster Armor, Super Dimension Century Orguss, Fight! Iczer One*, and their flagship title, *Super Dimensional Fortress Macross II: Lovers Again.*

"We're working very hard to produce dubbed tapes that do not in any way injure the source material," Napton says. "We're doing dub tapes that are faithful, that the translations are accurate; we haven't changed the names of the characters or the story points. Basically all we've done is added English voices, and we've tried to match the performances. And it's very, very hard. It's harder than I would have thought."

"I really have to commend anyone who attempts it, because there's a certain illogic almost in trying to dub over something that's produced in Japan because you're never going to match the linguistic quality, the vocal quality, of Japanese voice actors with Americans. It's impossible. The speech pattern, the inflections, the guttural qualities of Japanese are so different that you just can't match it.

"With the women the vocal quality is easier to match," Napton says. "But with the men — and it's no bias — it's harder to get the male actors up to the speed of the Japanese actors. It's just the way male Japanese voice actors perform verses the way females perform. But with our cast, I think we've done it."

Robert Napton describes his position as associate producer as having many functions: "I help prepare the ADR scripts; I help approve the scripts; I help in the casting. Basically, any aspect of it, I have my hand in it. But it's not a one-man operation. L.A. Hero and U.S. Renditions is me, and it's several other people."

"Ken Iyadomi is the producer. Raymond Garcia is our English screenplay writer, and our voice director for *Macross* and *Orguss* and *Guyver*, and he's very good. Quint Lancaster is our supervising director. Ken Iyadomi is the producer. I basically represent U.S. Renditions in the production of *Macross*, *Orguss*, and *Guyver*."

"L.A. Hero is its own company. Victor Garcia, who works for L.A. Hero, is the production coordinator/associate producer. He and I share the responsibility of coordinating things and making sure things are where they need to be."

* * *

Robert Napton became aware of Japanese animation in 1980 due to *Star Blazers*, the Americanized version of *Space Battleship Yamato*.

"I was reading an issue of *Starlog* magazine and saw there was a *Star Blazers* fan club. I joined that for a dollar, and I got a two-page newsletter that had the address of the C/FO (Cartoon/Fantasy Organization), and of Books Nippan. I went to Books Nippan in 1981, and started buying *Yamato* books and anime-related products."

Napton moved to Los Angeles to attend junior college, where he became active in the area animation clubs and at the USC and UCLA film schools. Napton met David Riddick, a Long Beach State University student, who supervised the translation of the *Macross* movie as a fan project. This impressed Books Nippan to hire Riddick to join their company.

Books Nippan is the Los Angeles retail outlet for Nippan Shuppan Hanbai U.S.A., Inc., an importer of Japanese merchandise.

In 1987, the Nippan management, along with Riddick and Kevin Seymour (manager of Nippan's animation division), formed U.S. Renditions to address the needs of Japanese animation fans.

"Importing has become a really expensive proposition, and keeping the prices down has been difficult. So, basically, U.S. Renditions was formed to answer the need of fans who wanted to be able to purchase these things at cheaper prices," Napton says.

"The first U.S. Renditions project was the *Robotech* soundtrack LP, which David Riddick produced. That was released in 1987 and that was really successful."

"Then in 1988 I was brought in to work on a series of English graphic novels based on the series *Iczer-One*," Napton says. "That project fell through; however, this year, we've made a deal to dub the *Iczer-One* videos, and those will be coming out sometime at the end of '92. (That's going to be a separate production from the shows we're doing with L.A. Hero, just because we don't have the time to integrate it into the L.A. Hero schedule.)"

Napton remained with the company to produce, with Riddick, the *Robotech* soundtrack CD, which had more tracks than the record, and which included a booklet. Both record and CD are now out of print.

"Our contract expired," Napton explains. "We just haven't pursued doing anything more with it because we became so involved with the video productions."

Then in 1989, Riddick and Napton met with Japanese producer Ken Iyadomi of Hero Communications. Iyadomi offered several Japanese series to be produced as subtitled videos, the first of which became *Aim for the Top! Gunbuster*, Volume One, and *Dangaio*, Volume One.

"We really didn't have full control over that project," Napton admits. "At that point, it was a good initial way for us to start to work with the Japanese companies to establish ourselves with them. They translated it for us and did a lot of things for us that in a sense made it easier, but also more difficult because no one was really prepared to subtitle Japanese animation professionally. We were the first company to try it."

Shortly after U.S. Renditions began subtitling, AnimEigo began releasing subtitled tapes with *Madox 01*, joined by U.S. Manga Corps with the *Dominion* series (the first volume done in conjunction with U.S. Renditions).

"It's easier to drive a road then to pave one," Napton quips. "And basically on our first two tapes, we were paving a road, and when you do that there are bumps and little things that sometimes go wrong."

But, *Dangaio* and *Gunbuster* were successful enough to gain U.S. Renditions the confidence of the Japanese companies, enabling them to import and subtitle more videos. In 1990, U.S. Renditions became independent, as a separate division of Nippan Shuppan Hanbai U.S.A. Inc.

"So, the new videos *Gunbuster*, Volume Two and Three, *Black Magic M-66*, *Appleseed*, and *Dangaio*, Volume Two and Three have been completely produced by U.S. Renditions without involvement of the Japanese companies. We license the product from them and produce the English versions ourselves for the U.S.," Napton says.

"The first thing I suggested we do was work with translators who not only were good translators, but who understood Japanese animation. You can translate Japanese, and that's fine, but you really need to understand the nuances and the technical qualities of Japanese animation. It's a very specific thing in terms of the technical dialogue that is used with the mecha and the concepts. So, basically, I picked Toshi Yoshida and Trish Ledoux of Animag Magazine to translate for us and edit the translation for all the new subtitled tapes."

As an independent, U.S. Renditions upgraded its product by reducing the font style and subtitling to accommodate a more complete translation.

"On the first *Gunbuster* and *Dangaio*, the Japanese company and some of the people at U.S. Renditions selected a bigger font style, which is easier to see, but we had to condense the script more," Napton recalls. "With our smaller font style, it's allowed us to include the complete dialogue without having to condense or delete dialogue.

"We just began subtitling full-time, and we were really happy with the way the product came out and the quality of the translation. We worked with a studio called Ultra-Video, which is located here in Burbank. They did all of our subtitling on the last eight tapes."

In 1992, Ken Iyadomi came to the United States to form L.A. Hero, an extension of the Japanese firm, Hero Communications. In conjunction with U.S. Renditions, they began producing dubbed versions of Japanese animation: *Orguss*, *Guyver*, and *Macross II*.

Why was *Macross II* dubbed instead of subtitled?

Napton explains: "The people producing this series are trying to get it to as many people as they can, in terms of the U.S. market, and they feel they can best accomplish that through dubbing. However, a subtitled *Macross II* for Fall 1993 is probably going to be a reality.

"We've gotten into a rhythm that we feel comfortable with dubbing now and feel that it's a greater challenge. When it's done well, the reward is greater because in a lot of cases we've recreated the performances of the voice actors, and in some ways we've improved on certain things."

A number of sources provided translation for the tapes: TMS, the producers of *Orguss*, gave its own translation. Ken Iyadomi translated Guyver; Ken Iyadomi and Yutaka Maseba translated *Macross II*.

The next step, Napton says, involves "Ray Garcia, myself, Victor Garcia, Ken Iyadomi, and supervising director Quint Lancaster. We sit down and write the ADR script. That involves watching the animation and creating a translation that syncs and sounds natural. Several days for a half-an-hour episode can be spent making sure that it looks and sounds right, and that the dialogue we're producing in English is the essence of what's said in Japanese. We don't change the ideas, the relationships to the characters or the story points. But often it's really difficult, because some things just don't translate very well.

"Then we do several rehearsals, which usually occurs during the same week. The recording of one episode usually takes two to three days of straight studio time. We sometimes will record two days in a row. Usually we will record one day, and then a few days later, we'll record another day. We try to break it up a little."

In an attempt to match the vocal integrity and gusto of the Japanese performances, U.S. Renditions and L.A. Hero try several approaches:

"First we listen to it ourselves and evaluate the performance and the characterization,"

Continued on Page 61

Behind the Scenes of the Fall Television Season: Interviews with Bob Camp, Joe Murray and Ben Edlund

By G. Michael Dobbs and Judith Reboy

Bob Camp

Bob Camp: Continuing to Push the Envelope with Ren and Stimpy

What does television's famed talking horse and *Ren and Stimpy* have in common?

After you've done magic nose goblins, what do you do for an encore?

Will there continue to be "Happy, Happy, Joy, Joy" after the departure of John Kricfalusi?

Director, producer and writer Bob Camp has the answers to these and other questions about what remains one of the hottest animated half-hours on television. It's easy to believe the hilarious and enthusiastic Camp that the best is yet to come for the show.

Camp has spent a large portion of his time in the last year defending his decision to stay with the show after the highly publicized departure of Kricfalusi, and while he's willing to continue discussing the conflict between Nickelodeon and Kricfalusi, he'd much rather discuss the new season.

"We're really pushing it this year," exclaims Camp. The shows are more outrageous, and new characters have been added. Here's a preview:

No Pants Today: Stimpy realized he's naked and goes on an epic quest for pants.

Jerry the Bellybutton Elf: Stimpy becomes so obsessed with his navel, he actually goes into his navel only to be enslaved making lint for Jerry the Bellybutton Elf.

Ren's Pecs: Ren decides to go for some pectoral implants made from some of Stimpy's buttfat.

Stimpy's Cartoon Show: an episode exploring a cartoon producer who doesn't do anything but gets all the credit.

It's difficult to give these short synopsis credit as Camp just doesn't describe them to you during an interview, he practically performs them.

There will be 14 new half-hour shows, and despite the envelope-pushing Camp and his staff have done, he's not run into too many problems with the cable network censors.

"We've had a 95% approval [of scripts]. We're doing better than before," reported Camp.

The up-coming season will see the introduction of new characters, including a Scottish children's show host named Haggis McNaggis voiced by Alan Young (of *Mr. Ed* fame), and Wilbur Cobb, a "really big kinda muttering old showbiz guy" with stand-up comedy legend Jack Carter providing the voice. Another veteran performer, Charlie Callas, is also doing voice work.

"It's great to work with these guys," said Camp, who is trying to get other great older comedians involved with the show.

The voice actor Camp describes as the "key cornerstone" of the show, Billy West, will be providing the voices of both Ren and Stimpy.

"We always try to make it funnier in the recording session. Occasionally we do have a little Standards thing about something," Camp said.

This season, the show will be animated in a studio in Korea. The question naturally arises if the Korean artists will "get" Ren and Stimpy.

"It's definitely alien [to them]," said Camp. "The owners of the studios understand the show quite well, and translate it easily." Camp plans to go the studio to meet with the artists later this year.

"The better layouts you send, the better animation you get," explained Camp.

The use of a foreign studio is a necessity for Camp and his staff to produce *Ren and Stimpy* on-time and on-budget, which were major problem's for Kricfalusi's Spumco Studio. Although tired of having to defend himself, Camp emphasizes that some media reports which characterized him as a new-coming interloper are simply not true.

"It's misconception. I was there from day one, from the very first drawing," he said." If you like *Ren and Stimpy*, then watch the shows. If you're not happy, then switch the channel."

Camp adds that "virtually the same crew is doing the show."

With two Ren and Stimpy CDs coming out as well as the video collections and a new group of merchandising, the pressure will be great on Camp to keep the Ren and Stimpy franchise on the cutting edge to maintain its great popularity. A conversation with him confirms he's certainly up for the challenge.

"We continue to get better," said Camp. "We try not to fall into a pattern, and are constantly looking for new ways to tell jokes and entertain." **GMD**

Ren and Stimpy ride off to seek new fortunes with a new series of shows. (©1993 Nickelodeon)

Joe Murray: The Independent Filmmaker Tries his Hand at Television with Rocko's Modern Life

The question facing any animation producer today is which road to travel...you can take the X-Men/Batman/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles route and produce a superhero adaptation, or you can take the Ren and Stimpy exit to a envelope-pushing half-hour, or you can go the way of Stephen Speilberg and re-tread some beloved animation stars.

Of you can travel like Joe Murray, the producer of *Rocko's Modern Life*. Murray is following in the tracks of the producers of such shows as *Doug*, *Rugrats*, *Eek! The Cat*, *The Simpsons*, and *Ren and Stimpy*. He's produced a very distinct show that is really nothing like anything else.

Murray, a veteran independent film maker is making his television series debut with Rocko, a cute little Generation X age wallaby a long way from home and on his own for the first time. While *Rocko's Modern Life* certainly has its share of gross-out moments, the series is genuinely clever and has a look all its own.

Murray said the move to television is a "big transition, to put it mildly."

No matter the problem, though, Murray is committed to produce a quality show.

"The style is more character and visual-drive. The dialogue is not the focus. It's tailored more on the old Looney Tunes." said Murray. "We try to put more intellectual appeal to it."

Nickelodeon approached Murray after seeing some of his independent work, and apparently wanted a show with the feel of an independent production.

In the world of animated funny animals, the Australian wallaby hasn't had much exposure, and Murray chose that animal to be his star's model for several reasons. He believed the appropriate Australian accent would be appealing. Wallabies are cute. Most importantly, though, he envisioned Rocko to be "a stranger in a strange land."

Because Rocko *is* a little cute wallaby in a strange country, Murray and his writers can construct animated stories about the most mundane of activities. No epic battles or titanic struggles are necessary on *Rocko's Modern Life* when one has stories about...taking out the trash, going grocery shopping or accompanying a friend to his house for dinner.

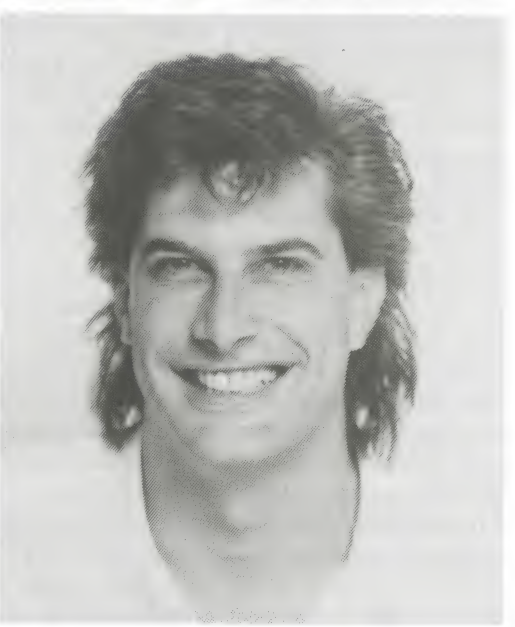
Like so many of the shows now considered classics, Rocko definitely operates on both an adult and juvenile level. There are plenty of sight gags, but there is also the kind of characterization often missing today in animated shows aimed at kids.

The voice talent for Rocko comes largely from a cast of stand-up comedians, and Murray said, "the voice sessions turn out to be a lot of fun. The director is not afraid of ad libs."

Murray described the show's creative process.

"The writers lay out each show in a written out-line form, then the director does the storyboard, and then the dialogue is written by the show's director."

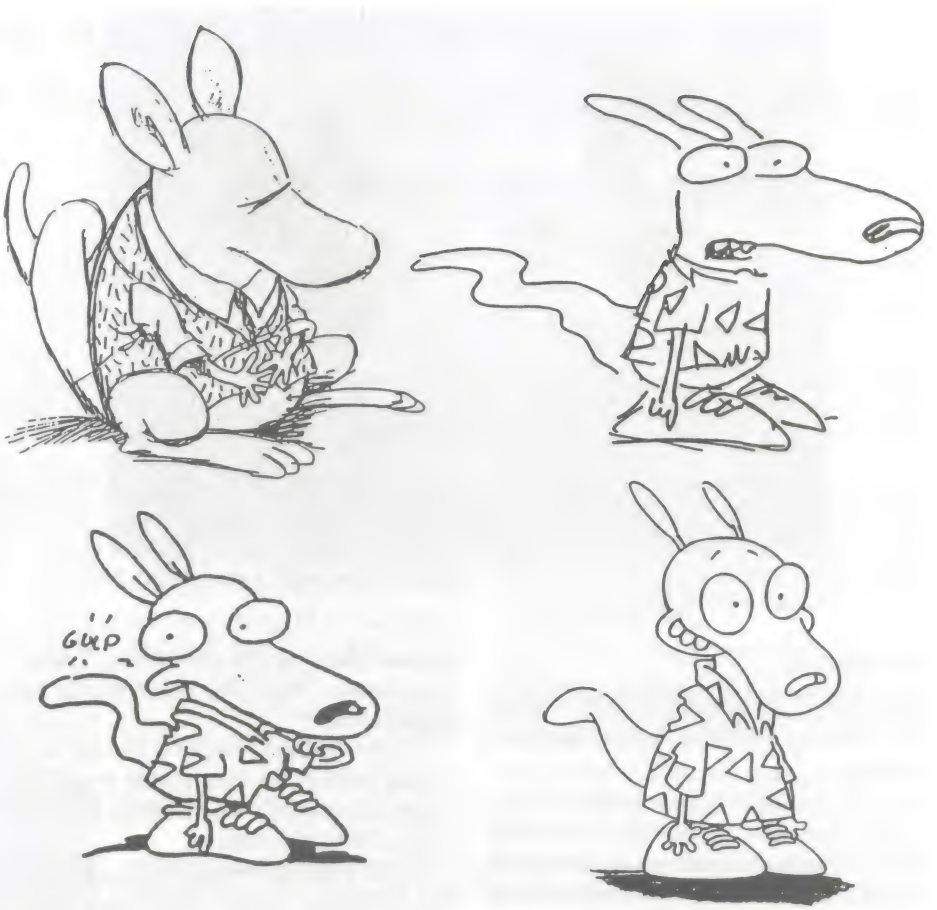
The show is animated in Korea by the same studio which was until recently used for some of the Disney television series. Murray is very concerned about quality, and had just finished viewing rushes for two days when interviewed.



Joe Murray

"There are always some initial problems. It's too big a process." said Murray. He has two supervisors working in Korea, and tries to catch problems in the beginning. In an industry now dependent on using foreign labor, the problems of communication are common, and have plagued other animated half-hours. Murray has even used pencil tests, a relatively unheard-of practice for television, to make sure the show has the necessary quality.

"When you're running a small studio, you're on top of all the details. It's very 'hands-on'," explained Murray. Producing a half-hour show for television means "a lot of delegation. It's like trying to put a cage around Godzilla."**MD**



Murray's character got his start in the *Zak & Travis* comic strip, and has undergone several transformations before hitting the television screens. (© 1993 Nickelodeon)

The Tick Makes the Leap to Television

He's big, blue and "nigh invulnerable." His battle cry is a hearty "Spoon!" He seeks out evil doers with the aid of his trusty View Master. He leaves a path of destruction wherever he goes. . .And he's coming to your television!

He's The Tick, the star of a new six-episode miniseries being prepared for the Fox Children's Network by Sunbow Productions.

The show is based on a popular black and white comic book published by New England Comics, a small outfit in the Boston area which grew out of a comic shop. The Tick's creator, Ben Edlund, describes his beginnings as very humble.

"I wasn't working, and one of my friends was a manager (at New England Comics). I was in high school and decided to do some comics for awhile. I did some work and brought it in. I heard they were a retailer that wanted to publish."

Much to Edlund's surprise, *The Tick* was an overnight success. "We weren't expecting it because it was right after the black and white explosion and implosion. So we were ready to bring out one or two issues, and have it be a certain noble experiment that failed, and I'd go on to college and do whatever I'd do. But it has this amazing sort of tenacity."

Caught off guard by the book's success, New England initially had a bit of trouble meeting the demand for Tick material. "We've come out with books. . .Almost a year between books in some cases, or at least once that I can remember, and although it's hard for our audience in a way, it's kept our numbers down to the most loyal fans. It still hasn't diminished the book, which is almost unheard of in the independent (comics) industry, so something works there. I don't know what it is yet, but I hope we can continue."

Edlund describes his title character, a super hero wannabe, as "a very innocent, hopeful thing who has been programmed by mass media to expect certain things from life. . .expect drama and comfortable adversity, just within his range. He doesn't realize that his life is kind of a joke because he's given himself over to that expectation. It's a nice joke. It's a pleasant joke. But it's still a joke. . .(He's) sort of a big, dumb guy with little islands of intelligence that allow him to make some astute connections and interesting perceptions."

If all of this seems a little deep for a cartoon spoof, don't be put off. The Tick and his associate, Arthur (a sensible, portly guy in a moth costume with — for presumably no good reason — bunny ears) live in a world as bizarre as anything ever seen on television.

To illustrate this point, among the characters to make the transition from the comics pages to the television screen are Chairface Chippendale, a megalomanic whose head literally is a piece of furniture, and the Man Eating Cow, whom the Tick proclaims a super heroine because she only munches on villains. Also along for the ride is Arthur's prim sister, Dot, who thinks that the Tick is a horrible influence on her brother. Edlund says that sharp-eyed fans will notice cameos by several other characters who may be given larger parts later on.

Surprisingly, two of the book's more popular characters will be among the missing. Paui the Samurai, who graduated into his

own spinoff comic, and the Tick's psuedo-love interest, Oedipus Ashley Stevens, a debutante turned ninja, are not scheduled to appear in the miniseries, although Edlund says they may be introduced at a later time if *The Tick* becomes a regular series.

Edlund says that he and Richard Liebmann-Smith, who collaborated with him on five of the six scripts, will be introducing many new characters created to replace Oedipus, one of his earliest creations, whom he feels in retrospect was too "conventional."

Fox has given Edlund a large amount of artistic involvement in the series. Originally hired only as a consultant, he eventually assumed the duties of script writing, storyboarding, and even (with Fox's approval) overseeing voice casting.

According to Edlund, the latter presents his greatest challenge. "Sound is the last thing I had considered in drawing the comic book, and it's been the most elusive and hard to define quality of the program. Everything else, I have an automatic vision on how it will, or how it should look."

Another worry is the all-important timing of the gags. Edlund plans exacting detail on his storyboards so that none of the jokes will be lost in the translation when the material is sent overseas to be animated.

He has nothing but praise for the treatment he has received from Fox. "It's kind of a rare opportunity. My involvement has been startling to me...That Fox has allowed me to take such an active part. It's very encouraging and very unexpected." He is quick to give Fox credit for the type of corporate policy that "puts the artistic vision back into what is essentially very commercialized programming."

Currently, most of the chores on *The Tick* and spinoff books *Paul the Samurai*, *The Man Eating Cow*, and *Circus of the Mighty*, have, by necessity, gone to other writers and artists because of Edlund's heavy involvement in the cartoon series, but he hopes to keep working on them in more of an editorial capacity so that he can continue to guide the destiny of the characters he created. In the meantime, he is pleased that farming out the work to other individuals will keep the characters alive and will allow New England Press to keep to a more regular publication schedule, so everyone will benefit.

He hopes that if the show is successful, *The Tick* will expand into other ventures as well. Among projects he would like to see are the "classic offshoots of TV, like action figures."

Spoon! The Tick's on television! (© Ben Edlund)

However, diehard fans of the comic may be disappointed that one logical piece of merchandise won't happen literally for years, if ever. In the comics, the Tick and Arthur love Pez candy, and Edlund confirmed that he and his associates had indeed approached the Pez company about producing a Tick version of their legendary plastic figural dispensers.

Unfortunately, apparently the company will only license characters who have been in existence for decades. "They haven't even considered the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," he laments.

But Edlund has his higher hopes for his hero than just plastic figures and Pez dispensers. One area he has been thinking about for a long time is the possibility of a Tick feature film, and he believes that the cartoon may help turn his dream into reality.

"If the show gets enough popularity, it would be a real possibility. It would be part of the whole cartoon show package. And if that was to be the case, I would really lobby to make it as much of an adult crossover as possible, because I wouldn't be interested in seeing, like a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle picture."

In the meantime, Edlund has his hands full preparing *The Tick* for Fox, which, according to Fox Children's Network President Margaret Loesch, may run it as early as the November sweeps. "Already there has been some enthusiasm at Fox about our progress so far," says Edlund, adding that "If we can get the viewers as charged and energized as the studio, then I think we'll definitely get signed on for more."

Ms. Loesch is a prime example of the faith that the network has in *The Tick* and Ben Edlund. She was so impressed by the comic that she ordered the miniseries after reading only one issue, before she knew of its phenomenal popularity. And her enthusiasm for the project has not dimmed. She says quite confidently, "I think *The Tick* is a winner."

So The Tick's legion of loyal followers should watch the skies, or at least their television listings, because his future looks very bright indeed.

Judith Reboy is a regular contributor to ANIMATO! who profiled Fox Children's Network President Margaret Loesch in our last issue.

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Beavis & Cool?

By Jim Fanning & Russ Miller

Beavis and Butt-Head are riding a tremendous wave of popularity, bringing with it discontent as well as appreciation of animated series' satirical edge. MTV's cutting edge cartoon has been praised for its creativity by such diverse publications as *Rolling Stone*, *TV Guide*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. *Time* magazine went so far as to say that *Beavis and Butt-Head* is "the bravest show ever run on national television." But the show's sometimes offensive subject matter has angered many parents and television advocates who raise concerns that the anti-social behavior will rub off onto susceptible viewers. Despite the criticism *Beavis and Butt-Head* draws huge cable audiences and has so permeated mainstream culture that David Letterman regularly imitates their banal laughter on his CBS show. The mindlessly cheerful but casually cruel pair are entering their second season on MTV, elevating creator Mike Judge to the forefront of alternative animation.

Now 30, Mike Judge's interest in animation began while in elementary school when he enrolled in a YMCA cartoon class. He enjoyed drawing animals until sixth grade when his artwork took a perverse turn and, as he told *Rolling Stone*, "I drew really sick cartoons." Judge's fascination with cartooning culminated in 1990 when he attended an animation festival in Dallas. With $200 he purchased a light box, animation paper, ink and colored pencils to make his own animated films at home in his spare time. His first short entitled *Office Space*, concerning an intimidated office worker named Milton, was snapped up by the Comedy Channel for $2000. While pursuing a career as a math teacher, Judge produced *Inbred Jed*. This animated oddity, set in a trailer park and starring a backwater banjo player, was shown on *Liquid Television*, MTV's showcase for alternative animation.

Then came *Frog Baseball*. Judge was trying to draw a kid he remembered from junior high that had a thin upper lip, big gums, and a moronic laugh. This became Butt-Head. Beavis was an amalgamation of several pyromaniacal metalheads. Friends (and possibly brothers), the duo is inseparable. An apparent victim of botched orthodontics, Butt-Head is in the driver's seat of the relationship. Beavis is a twisted Patrick Swayze look alike as seen in a broken mirror. Judge teamed these deranged juveniles in his third cartoon, detailing the ways and means of blowing up a grasshopper and hitting a homer with a frog. *Frog Baseball* was run on *Liquid Television* in September of 1992, and caught the attention of MTV vice president Abby Terkuhle. MTV ordered 65 four minute cartoons from Judge, and premiered *The Beavis and Butt-Head Show* in March 1993, forging a devoted audience in just one week.

But within that first week episodes were already being repeated. Due to delays in animation, only several of the 65 shorts were completed by the show's premiere. MTV decided to pull *Beavis and Butt-Head* until the animated sequences were finished. When the cable network brought back the "little wienerheads" in May they were more popular than ever. Where as music videos garner a .2 rating, the Boys pull in as much as a 2.4. The music channel is capitalizing on the popularity by basing other programming on the twosome. *Rock Videos That Don't Suck*, the *Beavis & Butt-Head* lead-in, is merely a repackaging of the same videos that MTV regularly airs, and in a specially animated segment Beavis and Butt-Head presented the Best Metal Group Award at the *MTV Music Video Awards*.

When first offered the deal with MTV, Mike Judge was so unfamiliar with mass-produced animation that he seriously wondered if he could animate so many segments single handedly. An industry friend pointed out that a studio would handle the work load. J.J. Sadelmeyer is the animation house credited with the bulk of the first season's production. To keep up with TV's incessant appetite, stock shots and cycles are frequently used.

These limited animation techniques are not only faster and more economical, but the quick and dirty style suits the B&B milieu. Much of *Beavis and Butt-Head* may be animated talking heads, but in a television production tradition stretching back at least as far as *Bullwinkle*, limited animation does not detract from the finished product. Full animation or even the slick cartooning found on Saturday morning programs would be inappropriate for the ignorant couch potatoes and their trashed up neighborhood.

In fact, some reviewers have sought to criticize the animation by calling it "scrawled out", but Mike Judge has embraced the term as an apt description of his artistic style. The scratchy pen-and-ink look compares to the raw cartooning of alternative newspapers, the same fertile ground from which sprang *The Simpsons'* Matt Groening. This minimalist approach is conveyed throughout, from the suitably hideous character design to the rudimentary colored pencil backgrounds.

This style of urban scrawl conveys the most unique characters to ever appear in TV

Butt-head Sucks?

© 1993 MTV Networks Inc.

animation. Caricatures of ignorant adolescent males obsessed with heavy metal music, Beavis and Butt-Head are so intensely stereotypical they achieve their own reality. They not only toy with firecrackers, they blow up buildings. The two don't just shoot cans with a BB gun, they down a jumbo jet with a skeetshooter. Anything to do with violence or sex captures their limited attention span. They don't think beyond the next commercial break, so the fact that they have no future does not bother them.

It's no surprise that B&B are so degenerate considering the adults whose presence the pair merely tolerate. Their burned-out guidance counselor, to choose one example from the pathetic high school faculty, conducts a counseling session with the two slackers by talking to himself. The most oft-used recurring character, the Boys' neighbor Mr. Anderson, is a bigoted, drunken veteran. This Buy American proponent is a sad commentary on those who preach, but do not practice, traditional American values. Like many of the adults in Beavis and Butt-Head's universe, Mr. Anderson is fat, lazy and self-centered.

The characters' dialogue is richly comic and indicative of their particular personalities. Beavis and Butt-Head generally speak like the illiterate idiots that they are. But the team of six writers gives the duo a few precocious moments, with clever comments that seem at times above or beyond their inadequate intellect. Pop culture references are a staple of their verbal exchanges suggesting that their real schooling has come from The Hair Club For Men, *Gilligan's Island* and (yes) MTV. These Boys rarely have ideas of their own; the inspirations that actually motivate their misadventures almost always come from watching television.

From their moronic laughter to the inebriated drawl of Mr. Anderson, Mike Judge provides most of the voices. The rich vocals add another dimension of well observed characterization making Judge the Mel Blanc of alternative animation. (Judge also composed and performed the *Beavis and Butt-Head* theme.)

The second season, which began on September 6, sports improved animation, and nothing could possibly be worse. In an apparent attempt to upgrade the scuzziness of the animation, the producers have added "production values" which undermine the raw quality so much a part of the *Beavis and Butt-Head* style.

A particularly glaring "enhancement" is the addition of a three-quarter view of Butt-Head. Judge himself is quoted in *Entertainment Weekly* as saying it "doesn't work." In the same article a director states that the new animation, done by a cartoon company in Korea, needs to be cruder and less fluid. Even the producers seem to see a need to return the show to it's original rough-and-tumble style.

Judge's creation is not without its detractors. Many are unable to appreciate the humor and artistic merit of *Beavis and Butt-Head* because the material is at times vulgar and offensive. Some feel that the Boys' scatological language and destructive behavior have adverse effects on children (and impressionable adults). There is cause for concern that young viewers, unable to understand the satire, may actually imitate the ruinous behavior portrayed. In fact, MTV banned four of the original episodes, and relegated others to the eleven o'clock time slot. (The early evening broadcast of the show has always been preceded by a disclaimer.)

The saving grace is that the creators are not employing such material simply for the sake of using it or even for shock value. The behavior, however questionable, flows directly from the characters and their delightedly deranged take on life. Besides, as an MTV spokesperson told the *Los Angeles Times*, "We believe the audience knows the difference between an animated, stupid cartoon that makes them laugh and something that is real and to be imitated."

Although the controversy rages, Beavis and Butt-Head march on in ignorance, which is pretty much the whole point. Beavis and Butt-Head fulfill the daily minimum requirements of any cartoon, and then some. For some reason, as the MTV disclaimer puts it, the little weinerheads make us laugh.

Jim Fanning's look into the making of Aladdin was featured in ANIMATO! Issue 23. This is Russ Miller's first contribution to ANIMATO!

The Incredible 1930s
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—STEPHEN WORTH, STORYBOARD

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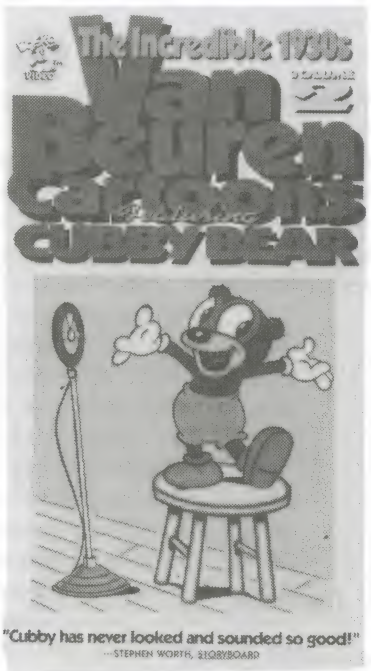
70 Minutes



"Van Beuren Volume Two" brings you the first nine "Cubby" cartunes made in the early thirtys. Titles are: "Opening Night", "Love's Labor Won", "The Last Mail", " Bubles and Troubles", "Barking Dogs", " Fresh Ham", "Indian Whoopee", "Nut Factory", World Flight". 67 Minutes

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Van Beuren Cartoons
Featuring
THE LITTLE KING
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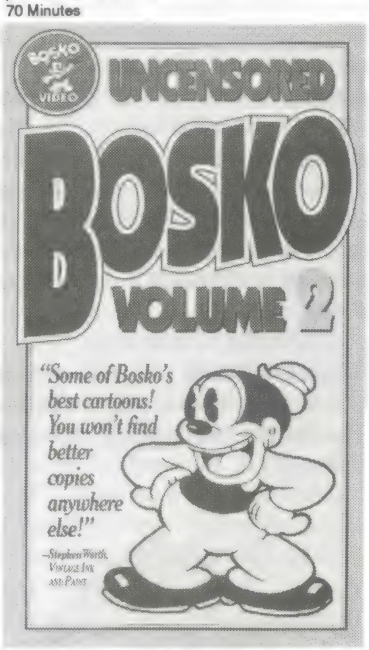
—STEPHEN WORTH, STORYBOARD

"Van Beuren Volume Three" contains eleven rare Little King cartoons. Titles are: "A Dizzy Day", "AM to PM", "The Fatal Note", "5 Pals", "Jest of Honor", "Jolly Good Felons", "Sultan Pepper", "A Royal Good Time", "Art for Art's Sake", "Cactus King". 84 Minutes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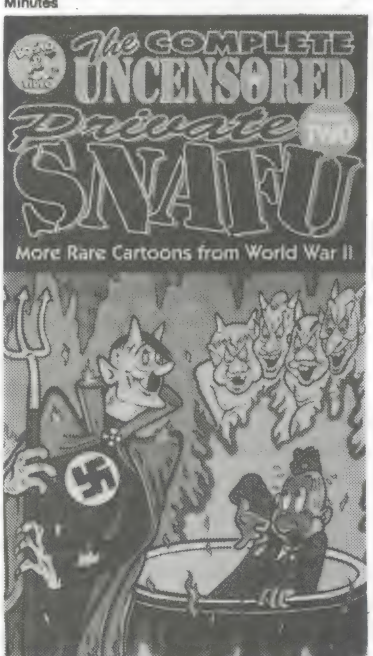
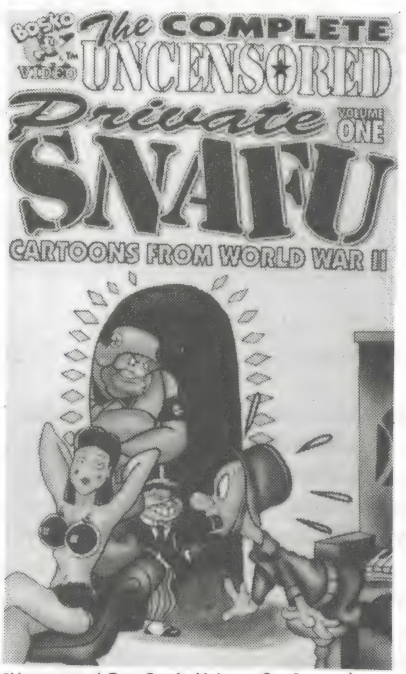
"Bosko Volume Two" contains "Sinking In The Bathtub", "Hold Anything", "Box Car Blues", "Ain't Nature Grand", "Dumb Patrol", "Bosko's Holiday", "Bosko Shipwrecked!", "Bosko's Soda Fountain", "Bosko At The Zoo". 67 1/2 minutes



"Uncensored Pvt. Snafu Volume Two" contains "The Chow Hound", "Censored", "Outpost", "Payday", "Target Snafu", "A Few Quick Facts: Inflation", "Three Brothers", "In the Aleutions", "A Few Quick Facts: Fear", "It's Murder She Says", "Hot Spot", "Operation Snafu", "No Buddy Atoll", "Private Snafu Presents Seaman Tarfu".
73 Minutes



"Uncensored Pvt. Snafu Volume One" contains "Coming! Snafu!", "Gripes", "Spies", "The Goldbrick", "The Infantry Blues", "Fighting Tools", "The Home Front", "Rumors", "Booby Traps", "Snafuperman", "Snafu vs. Malaria Mike", "A Lecture On Camouflage", "Gas" and "Going Home". These rare films were made by Warner Bros. for the Armed Forces during WWII. These were animated by the great Warner directors, and voiced by Mel Blanc. 62 minutes

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What Happened to The Terrible Thunderlizards?

by Joseph A. Reboy

Joe Reboy updates his interview with Savage Steve Holland from our last issue to explain the changes in Holland's EEK! The Cat show.

When the second season of *EEK! The Cat* premiered on Saturday Sept. 25, 1993, the long-awaited sub-series, *The Terrible Thunderlizards* failed to materialize. Also absent were the shorts described in the previous issue by Savage Steve and Bill Kopp which were to have featured the Squishy Bearz and the supporting cast of players in the EEK! Universe.

What happened? Where did the title *EEK! and the Terrible Thunderlizards* get to? Where indeed did the Thunderlizards themselves get to? The answers are an interesting look at the way an animated series evolves.

The change in direction for *EEK!* occurred from an animation glitch. In the interim between the first and second interviews, changes happened which altered the format of the series.

"There was a time when the series was supposed to be *EEK! and The Terrible Thunderlizards*, so that's why we were going to do two fifteen minute shows per half hour, so we could introduce a spin-off called the Thunderlizards," explained Holland.

"Then *EEK's* numbers were really high, and Margaret Loesch, who runs the Fox Kid's Network said, 'Well, why should we screw around with *EEK!* which is doing well, so let's make Thunderlizards specials and introduce them next year as their own show,' and I was even more upset about that with my huge head (read 'Ego') I'd rather have two shows than split up *EEK!*.

"So then, Thunderlizards came back (from Nelvana Animation Studios), and one of the characters was the wrong color. You know how these things go away for like six months, we have model sheets, but we hadn't seen them moving, and once it moved it was totally wrong."

"So we have to re-do six of our *Thunderlizards* shows, and that can take a long time, and now we're behind schedule on *Thunderlizards*. So , Margaret said since we're going to get them back during November during Sweeps Weeks, EEK! will introduce his new friends, *The Terrible Thunderlizards*. Then next year, they'll split up into *EEK! The Cat and the Terrible Thunderlizards*. Does that make any sense to you?" concluded Holland.

Holland's remarks suggest that *EEK!* is facing a third season. "*EEK!* did very well last year, and a couple of times was even Number One rated for all of Saturday morning. We were really darn happy about that."

This however failed to address the issue of the one or two minute shorts featuring the *EEK!* supporting characters, such as the "Squishy Bearz Rainbow of Enchanted Fun Minute," which was to have been a weekly cliff-hanger.

"I think we thought we had more time than we did. To put in that Squishy Bearz minute was going to cut into the EEK! humor, and so we didn't want to give that up. We actually did a couple of those, and we intercut them into the show, so it's like EEK! is watching them on the TV. It's just like last year where the Squishy Bearz get into some really ridiculous situation," said Holland

"For instance, this year we really had this Squishy Bearz minute that was really great. It was originally called 'There Are Spiders All Over Me,' but they wouldn't let us do that. We [did] make one where Pierre just had to go to the bathroom real bad, and it sounds really gross, but it's not that at all. We incorporated that into the beginning of the episode, and the second part of the episode where Eek! ends up in their world. And you'll just have to see it to believe it. But we got a great Squishy Bearz that we really worked hard on that we got to cut into the whole EEK! show, and it worked really well. You gotta love those Squishy Bearz. We put them in a lot. We have this one called 'Night on Squishy Mountain' in which they have their own Squishy Bearz Theme Park where they have rides like 'The Giant Hole' and 'The Lake of Dirt,' and 'The Lawsuit Waiting to Happen Roller Coaster.' It's all very silly, and I think you're going to like it."

The *EEK!* merchandising blitz that was promised months ago has so far only produced a stuffed EEK! the Cat., and that has not been supported by any advertising of any sort. Savage Steve speaks highly of the EEK! plush. "The EEK! doll is really great. There are some T-shirts coming out soon that are really neat. He's sort of hard guy to grasp into, and we don't want to be accused being Ren and Stimpy or Beavis and Butthead, or anything like that. Eek's thing is really just being nice, and how do you translate it into a t-shirt? It's not easy."

The delay in merchandising was the result of a strange catch-22 scenario for a Saturday morning cartoon. You aren't on prime time, so not enough people watch you, therefore, it doesn't benefit the network to okay deep merchandising. So how does a show such as *EEK!* get around that situation? Simple. Find a holiday, and do a prime time special. Savage, who all ready had made a Halloween special for the Mars Candy Company, had made a Christmas episode in the first season of EEK!, which was something of a standout since it featured the entire episode done in rhyming verse. This year, he was given the task of doing yet another heart-warming story.

"The prime time special is so cool. It's going to be on some time around December 5th. We get to do a few more jokes. On Saturday morning, you can't get away with much. We have Bobcat Goldthwaite in it, and William Shatner is playing Santa Claus, which is pretty funny because you know how dramatic he is... 'Look-Elmo-We-Can't-Get-Christmas-Out-Of-The-Way [is the title]. It's just great. The Barbie Twins are in it. It's a hilarious cast of characters, I think you'll be pleased. This one is very very funny. Sharky the shark dog (who appears to be a major player this season) is heart-broken because he wants to be with his family of evil shark dogs at Christmas. EEK! decides to see if he can find Santa to see if he can find out where Shark's family is, and they go on a little journey."

The Savage Studios has altered in a major way. Bill Kopp, the marvelous talented co-creator of *EEK!* and Savage's long-time co-worker is no longer officially a part of the studio.

"Bill is trying to make his own show. He's done this really great show for Disney called *'Shnookums and Meat'*. He wants his own show, which I don't blame him. He and I have worked together on like 6,000 different things, and a lot of it always ends up where I get it started so my name is first, but Bill is the much more talented animator, and the guy deserves his own show....he's won two Academy Awards. Somehow I've lucked into these things,and so when it has animation involved, my first phone call is to Bill. So, I think Bill sees all this stuff he does in my stuff becomes very successful.

"It's sort of like Paul [McCartney] and John [Lennon]. If you ever said Paul McCartney was the genius, and we all know John Lennon had a lot to do with it too, and that's what made the Beatles great. I think people get frustrated. But it's incredibly amicable, and he's still going to voice EEK!. He's my best friend. We still hang out. I have a deal at Fox, and he doesn't have a deal at Fox, he has a deal at Disney. It's not going to be competing with *EEK!*, it's going to be part of the Marsupilami half-hour."

Changed character colors and withheld merchandising haven't seemed to affect Savage Steve Holland. His enthusiasm for his work is just as strong, and his success at Fox means we can look forward to at least another two seasons of Savage humor.

Joe Reboy interviewed Savage Steve Holland and Bill Kopp in the last issue of ANIMATO!.

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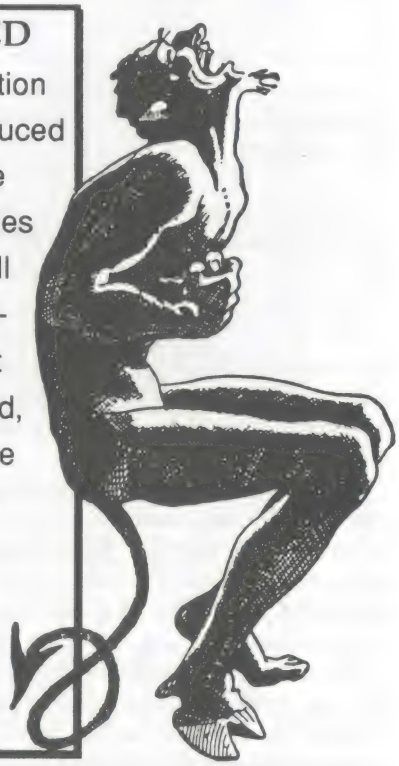

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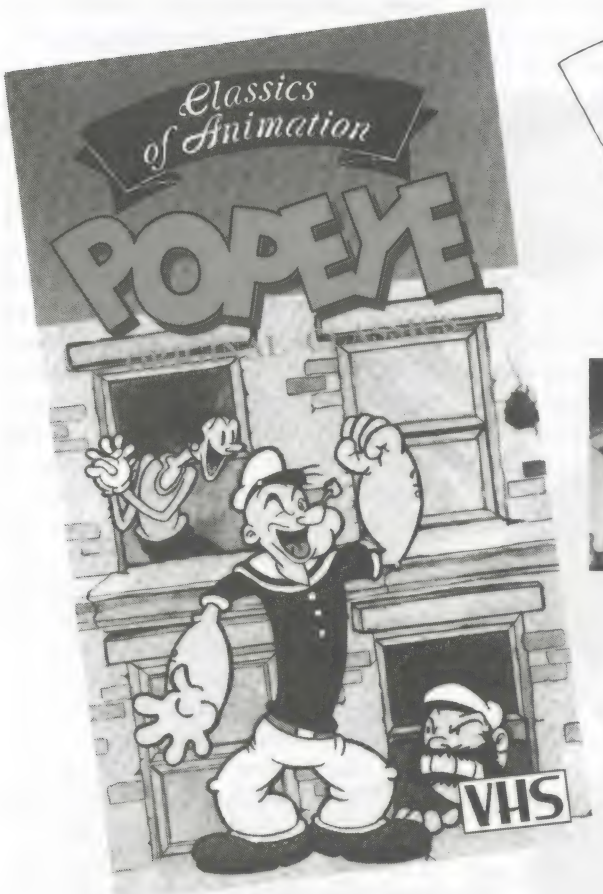

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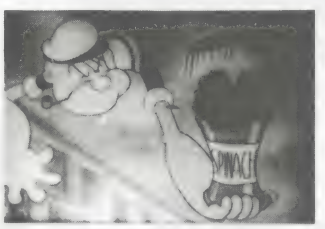

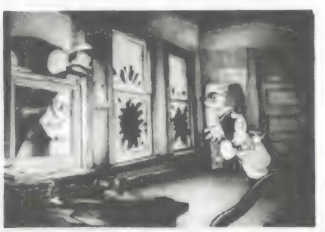

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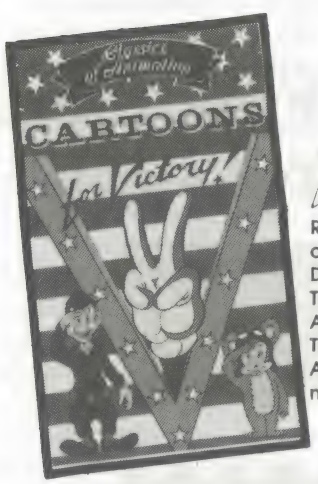

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The Animated Dark Knight: Part Two

The Phantasm! (© 1993 Warner Brothers)

Batman's lovelife revealed! (© 1993 Warner Brothers)

By Christopher Kindred

Chris Kindred recently went deep into the Batcave at Warner Brothers animation for ANIMATO! and filed the following updates on *Batman: The Animated Series*. GMD

Batman: Mask of the Phantasm

Batman flies back into theaters this holiday season in a Warner Bros. full-length animated feature, *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*.

Following the success of the made-for-video movie *Tiny Toons: How I Spent My Summer Vacation*, Jean MacCurdy, executive producer of *Batman: The Animated Series*, ordered a made-for-video Batman film. Studio executives were so impressed with the work in progress that they decided to give it a theatrical release.

The film was produced by series producers Alan Burnett, Eric Radomski, and Bruce Timm. Burnett also wrote the film's story. He then assigned the job of writing the screenplay to series story editors Paul Dini, Martin Pasko, and Michael Reaves. Segments of the film were assigned to series directors Kevin Altieri, Boyd Kirkland, Frank Paur, and Dan Riba.

The film features the same dark look and feel as the series, but to an even greater degree. Since it is being released theatrically, the animators are free to tell a darker, more mature Batman story. And Alan Burnett's story is very dark indeed.

The film, in a series of flashbacks, deals with Bruce Wayne's past. It reveals his first attempts at crime fighting and his first appearance as Batman. It also chronicles Bruce's relationship with Andrea Beaumont. Andrea was Bruce's one true love, the one woman who could have stopped him from becoming Batman.

The film also introduces the Phantasm, a costumed vigilante with deadly methods. Soon, the police blame Batman for the Phantasm's killing sprees and he becomes an outlaw. Batman's hunt for the Phantasm ends in a confrontation with the Joker and the recently returned Andrea Beaumont.

"It's very dark," said co-producer and character designer Bruce Timm. "It's going to be great!"

Batman: Mask of the Phantasm
Release Date: December 22, 1993
MPAA Rating: PG (Parental Guidance Suggested)
Running Time: 75 minutes
Cast: Batman: Kevin Conroy, Bullock: Robert Costanzo, Commissioner Gordon:

Bob Hastings, Alfred: Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. **Also Starring:** Andrea Beaumont: Dana Delany, Carl Beaumont: Stacy Keach, Joker: Mark Hamill, Councilman Reeves: Hart Bochner, Salvatore Vallestra: Abe Vigoda. **Animation Services:** Don Yang Animation and Spectrum Services

Coincidence with Comic Book Story

Bruce Wayne falls in love with the one woman who could stop him from becoming Batman. A vigilante appears in Gotham City and begins terrorizing the underworld, leaving behind the bloody bodies of all who stand in his way. Batman is blamed for these crimes and is hunted by his former friends in the Gotham City police department.

It's not the plot of *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm.*

It's the plot of *Batman: Year Two.*

Batman: Year Two was a four issue mini-series within a series that appeared in *Detective Comics* #575-578 (June-September 1987). It was written by Mike W. Barr and illustrated by Alan Davis and Todd McFarlane.

In *Batman: Year Two*, Leslie Thompkins introduces Bruce Wayne to a beautiful young lady named Rachel Caspian. Bruce is immediately attracted to her, to the extent that he even begins to question his activities as Batman.

But Bruce doesn't know that Rachel, too, has been a victim of violent crime. Many years ago, her family was attacked by a burglar. Her mother was killed and her father was badly injured. Unbeknownst to Rachel, her father was driven to become the Reaper, a scythe-wielding vigilante. The Reaper kept Gotham's underworld terrorized for years until he mysteriously disappeared.

During the course of the story, Rachel's father resumes his guise as the Reaper. He leaves a trail of bodies in his wake and the police blame Batman for his crimes. This leads to the formation of an unholy alliance between Batman and Gotham's underworld to stop the Reaper.

Eventually, the Reaper is revealed as Rachel's father and dies in battle with Batman. Batman's name is cleared, and Rachel becomes a nun.

Batman: Mask of the Phantasm tells the story of Bruce's relationship with Andrea Beaumont. Andrea was his one true love, the woman who could have stopped him from becoming Batman.

It is also the story of the Phantasm, a death-masked vigilante who wields a scythe-like claw against Gotham's underworld. Soon, Batman is blamed for his crimes and is hunted by Gotham's police. Batman's hunt for Phantasm ends in a three-way confrontation with Phantasm and the Joker, with Andrea Beaumont's life at risk.

"Yeah, I guess that is kind of similar," *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm* co-producer and character designer Bruce Timm said when asked about the similarities in plot and character design.

"Alan (Burnett) came at the story from an entirely different place than Year Two," story editor Paul Dini said.

"I never even thought of the Reaper character when I designed Phantasm," Timm said.

"Alan's original take on the character was based on Mysterio from the *Spider-Man* comics," Timm added. "His idea was that there was this scary figure who walked around with a big cloud of smoke around it. I said, 'Oh, that's kind of neat. That would work really well in animation.'"

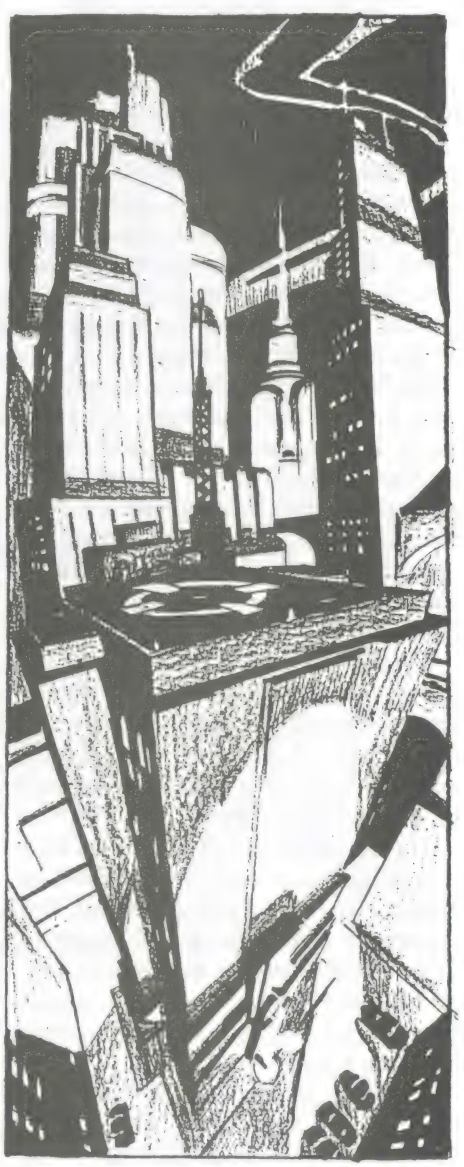
Still, what about the similarities in the Reaper and Phantasm costumes? Both wear hooded cloaks, and have skull-like masks, armored body suits, and arms that end in blades.

"He (Burnett) described it (Phantasm) as looking like the angel of death," Timm explained. "I thought, 'Oh great, what's the angel of death supposed to look like?' It's actually very typical death mask imagery."

But what about the scythe-like claw Phantasm uses?

"The claw was a total afterthought," Timm said. "At one point, as a red herring, we wanted to give one of the characters that you suspect of being the Phantasm a prosthetic claw. That's where we came up with the idea of putting the claw on the Phantasm. We liked the claw on the Phantasm. It gave him an edge of menace that it didn't have before. So, that's where the claw came from. it had nothing to do with the Reaper.

"I wish, in fact, that we had thought of the Reaper," Timm added wistfully. "I think the Reaper is a much better name than the Phantasm. What is a Phantasm? It doesn't mean anything. Whereas the Reaper is a neat name. So, it could have been our version of the Reaper, but it isn't."



Episode Guide Part 2

Episode Title: Each episode is listed alphabetically.

Airdate: When possible, the original airdate of each episode has been listed.

Rating: Each episode has been rated on a scale of zero to five BatSignals. The author conferred with a number of fans of the show and rated the episodes based on plot, animation, action, and other factors. These ratings are, of course, very subjective.

Synopsis: The major events of each episode are summarized.

Inside Jokes: Many of the episodes are filled with animators' in-jokes. The author has included many of the in-jokes that he was aware of. However, he concedes that there may be many more that he was not aware of.

Interesting Features: This heading covers the miscellaneous things that make each episode unique.

Credits: W: Writer **T:** Teleplay **D:** Director

Cast: Those actors listed in the end credits as being the stars of each episode, listed in alphabetical order by character name. Other than Batman, all are alphabetized by their last name, so Alfred is not at the very beginning because his surname is Pennyworth.

Guest Stars: Those actors listed in the end credits as being the guest stars in each episode, listed alphabetically by character name.

Animation Services: The companies that provided the animation for each episode, as listed in the end credits.

Last September, Fox launched the second season of *Batman: The Animated Series* with a "Premiere Week." Five unseen episodes from the first season were aired.

Mudslide
Airdate: September 7, 1993
Rating: Three Bat Signals
Synopsis: Clayface returns to Gotham City and attempts to steal the elements he needs to cure his unique condition. Unfortunately, this leads to a confrontation with Batman.....
Inside Jokes: Like *Feat of Clay, Parts 1 and 2*, this episode features numerous movie references. The most obvious of these is a reference to "the Bates motel."
Interesting Features: This episode focuses on the tragic fate of one of Batman's most popular villains. At the beginning of the episode, Batman offers to help Clayface find a cure for his rapidly deteriorating condition. Ironically, it is not Batman who finds a cure, but Clayface's accomplice. Moreover, rather than curing Clayface, Batman instead **prevents** him from being cured and brings about his apparent destruction....
Credits: W: Alan Burnett **T:** Steve Perry **D:** Eric Radomski **Cast:** Batman: Kevin Conroy, Alfred: Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. **Guest Stars:** Stella Bates: Pat Musick, Billy: Rob Clothworthy, Clayface: Ron Perlman, Fianceé: Marcia Wallace. **Animation Services:** Studio Junio.

Paging the Crime Doctor
Airdate: September 9, 1993
Rating: Two Bat Signals
Synopsis: Dr. Matthew Thorne was a med school friend of Thomas Wayne and Leslie Thompkins. But, he is also mob boss Rupert Thorne's brother. Several years ago, Dr. Thorne lost his medical license when he removed a bullet from his brother and failed to notify the police. Since then, he has only been able to practice medicine as the personal physician to Rupert Thorne. Now, Rupert needs a delicate heart operation and Matthew needs an assistant. So, Rupert's mob kidnaps Matthew's old friend, Dr. Leslie Thompkins....
Interesting Features: One of the episodes written by a comics professional.
Credits: W: Mike Barr and Laren Bright **T:** Randy Rogel and Martin Pasko **D:** Frank Paur **Cast:** Batman: Kevin Conroy, Alfred: Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. **Guest Stars:** Beechum: Gary Kroeger, Chubb: George Dzundza, Leslie Thompkins: Diana Muldaur, Matthew Thorne: Joseph Campanella, Rubert Thorne: John Vernon, Woman: Linda Dangcil. **Animation Services:** Don Yang Animation

Shadow of the Bat, Part 1
Airdate: September 5, 1993
Rating: Two and a half Bat Signals
Synopsis: Commissioner Gordon's new assistant, Gil Mason, is winning the war on Gotham's underworld. But, Mason is secretly working for Two-Face in a scheme to consolidate Gotham's mobs and take over the police department. When Mason frames Commissioner Gordon for taking bribes, Barbara Gordon takes matters into her own hands as Batgirl....
Interesting Features: This episode introduces two new "characters" to the series. The most important of these is Batgirl. Batman assumes the guise of "Matches" Malone to investigate Mason's mob connection in this episode. Batman has used the identity of "Matches" for many years in the comics.

Mob boss Rupert Thorne is captured at a crime scene in this episode, which should end his criminal career. Thus, it is interesting that this episode is, chronologically, the last episode that Thorne appears in during the first season.

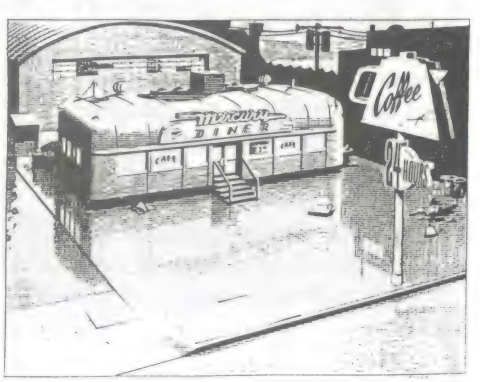
Few episodes feature many handguns. This one (and part two) is an exception.
Credits: W: Brynne Stephens **D:** Frank Paur **Cast:** Batman: Kevin Conroy, Bullock: Robert Costanzo, Commissioner Gordon: Bob Hastings, Alfred: Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.

Guest Stars: Summer Gleeson: Mari Devon, Barbara Gordon: Melissa Gilbert, Mad Dog: Greg Burson, Gil Mason: Tim Matheson, Robin: Loren Lester, Rupert Thorne: John Vernon, Two-Face: Richard Moll, Janet Van Doren: Lynette Metley. **Animation Services:** Don Yang Animation

Shadow of the Bat, part 2
Airdate: September 6, 1993
Rating: Three Bat Signals
Synopsis: Two-Face traps Batman and Robin in a flooded subway, leaving Batgirl on her own as she tries to save Commissioner Gordon's life....
Interesting Features: After discovering that Batgirl is Barbara Gordon, Gil Mason conveniently injures his head and ends the episode in a coma....
Credits: W: Brynne Stephens **D:** Frank Paur **Cast:** Batman: Kevin Conroy, Bullock: Robert Costanzo, Commissioner Gordon: Bob Hastings, Alfred: Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. **Guest Stars:** Summer Gleeson: Mari Devon, Barbara Gordon: Melissa Gilbert, Mad Dog: Greg Burson, Gil Mason: Tim Matheson, Robin: Loren Lester, Two-Face: Richard Moll, Janet Van Doren: Lynette Metley. **Animation Services:** Don Yang Animation

Clayface returns in a new episode. (© 1993 Warner Brothers)

The Worry Men
Airdate: September 8, 1993
Rating: Four Bat Signals
Synopsis: At a party celebrating her return from a jaunt to the South American rainforests, socialite Veronica Vreeland gives her guest interesting souvenirs: Worry Men. Worry Men are little dolls that sleepers place under their pillows at night and tell their problems to. Then, the dolls are supposed to relieve your stress by doing the worrying for you. Following Veronica's example, many of the wealthiest citizens of Gotham City take to placing Worry Men under their pillows. Unfortunately, the Mad Hatter has planted microchips in the dolls and plans to extort his wealthy victims, including Bruce Wayne....
Interesting Features: Paul Dini was inspired to write this episode after learning that his sister owned a set of Worry Men. Veronica Vreeland was last seen getting into trouble with the Penguin in *Birds of a Feather*.
Credits: W: Paul Dini **D:** Frank Paur **Cast:** Batman: Kevin Conroy, Alfred: Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. **Guest Stars:** Dana Blessing: Vernee Watson-Johnson, Jaguar Shaman: Roger Rose, Mad Hatter: Roddy McDowall, Hayden Sloane: Levar Burton, Veronica: Marilu Henner. **Animation Services:** Don Yang Animation



Fox Moves Batman to Saturday Morning

Batman has done such a good job of cleaning up Gotham City, he's going to cut his crime-fighting schedule back to one morning a week. Or, rather, the Fox network is making the decision for him.

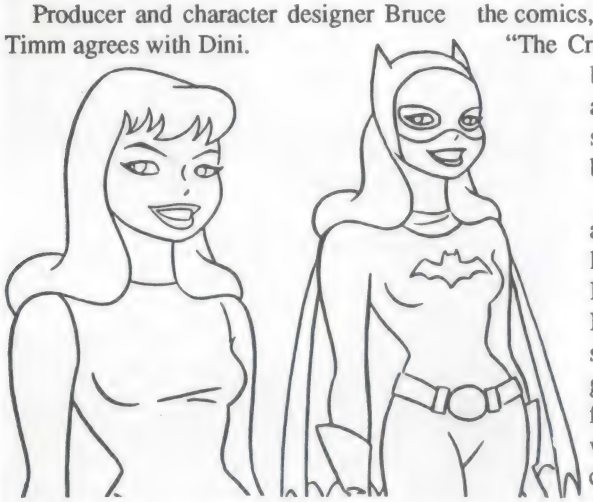
Batman: The Animated Series is joining Fox's Saturday morning lineup for its eagerly awaited second season.

The second season will consist of twenty new episodes. Unfortunately, they probably will not be aired until next Fall.

The series will undoubtedly be affected by its move to Saturday mornings. Fox has requested more Robin episodes as a result. But, fans won't see the expected superhero team-ups.

"To a great extent, we don't even want to do that," story editor Paul Dini said. "Though we have access to a lot of the DC Comics characters, we have our own special continuity with the *Batman* series. We don't feel like violating that. We think that if you bring in Green Arrow or the Flash or somebody, you're just having them come in and make an appearance. There's no reason for Batman to seek out those characters. There's no reason for them to be there except that you are doing a super hero team-up."

Producer and character designer Bruce Timm agrees with Dini.



Barbara Gordon, alias Batgirl. (© 1993 Warner Brothers)

"Everybody always wants the Batman-Superman team-up or the Batman-Green Arrow team-up," Timm said. "Those are just too obvious for me. Every time we have come up with one of these guest appearances, we always wanted to make them bizarre."

During the first season, Batman did have a team-up with another DC Comics character: Zatanna. In the comics, Zatanna has magical powers and is a former member of DC Comics' Justice League, along with Batman. The version of Zatanna that appeared in the series was substantially different from her comic book counterpart.

"No one would have expected the Zatanna team-up," Timm said. "But, that worked in the context of the show. She's not really a super heroine. She's a stage magician."

According to Timm, fans frequently ask when Black Canary will appear in the series.

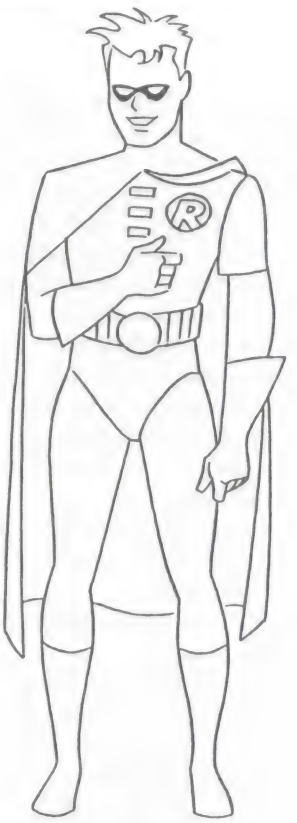
"We had a take on Black Canary," Timm said. "She would have been just a private detective who worked with Batman on a certain case."

Both Timm and Dini would like to work the Creeper into the series somehow. The Creeper was a brightly garbed maniac created for DC Comics by Steve Ditko. He has crossed paths with Batman several times in the comics, much to Batman's annoyance.

"The Creeper would have worked just because he's weird and bizarre and it would have been neat to see a Steve Ditko character bouncing around," Timm said.

"There's something appealing about doing a character like the Creeper with Batman," Dini added. "You would have Batman, who is really rigid and self-disciplined and who could go off the deep end and be very frightening, paired up with a guy who is a lunatic and who takes chances."

Attempting to put the Creeper into the series posed several problems for Dini and Timm.



With *Batman: The Animated Series* moving to Saturday morning, expect to see more of this guy. (© 1993 Warner Brothers)

"First," Timm said, "we couldn't figure out how to tell his origin story, get him teamed-up with Batman, and have them have an adventure, all within 22 minutes. Second of all, nobody figured out his personality. I have an idea in my head of what his personality is like. But, his dialogue was just awful in the story outline that came in."

"It was like bad Joker dialogue," Dini explained.

"If he's going to be funny," Timm said, "he's going to be funny in a really bizarre kind of way. Almost like Robin Williams with a nasty edge. Really free form, non-sequitur, really menacing and bizarre."

Still, Timm and Dini would like to work him into the series eventually.

"I kind of regret that we never got him quite right," Timm said. "If we do a third season, that should be at the top of the list of things to do."

One well-known comic character will appear in the series in the second season. But not because Dini and Timm like him. In fact, quite the opposite is the case.

"We will have Bane," Dini said.

Bane is a homicidal maniac who, in recent issues of the comic, shattered Bruce Wayne's spine. Now, Bruce is crippled and a new character has become Batman.

Like many long-time Batman fans, Dini and Timm were unhappy with the treatment Bruce received in his own comic. But, unlike most fans, they are in a position to do something about it.

"This is what the Bane-Batman battle would have been like if we were calling the shots," Dini promised.

"If we didn't have to worry about sales," Timm added.

In the episode, mob boss Rupert Thorne hires Bane to eliminate Batman. This leads to an almost twenty-minute running battle between Batman and Bane.

But, the series will be aired on Saturday mornings when the second season begins. How will that affect the violence in the show? According to Dini and Timm, it really won't be that different from the afternoon shows.

"It doesn't seem like they've given us any harder time for Saturday mornings than they have for the afternoons," Timm said. "They have been harder on us this year because of the negative publicity due to the Senate. But, they've never once said, 'Because you're on Saturday mornings, you can't do that.'"

Still, some changes had to be made.

In the second season episode *Harlequinade*, the Joker has an atomic bomb which he plans to detonate in Gotham City. Fox apparently had no problems with the bomb. But, in a later scene, Harley Quinn attempts to kill the Joker. She put her gun in his face and pulls the trigger. In the original version, she is quite surprised to learn that she is out of bullets.

"Fox had a real problem with that," Timm said. "That she was really going to kill him. We had to change her expression, so that she doesn't look surprised. But, it'll play. And, they kind of have a problem when we put a gun to anyone's head anyway."

"Actually," Dini added, "they kind of have a problem with Harley anyway. I always try to sneak some sexual innuendo in."

Fox apparently grew leery of Harley after the episodes *Harley and Ivy* and *The Man Who killed Batman*. In *Harley and Ivy*, Harley complains, "You'd think that after living with Mr. J., I'd be used to a little pain." During a scene in *The Man Who Killed Batman*, Harley disguises herself as an attorney. When detective Bullock asks if he knows her, she replies, "I served you a subpoena once. It was a small subpoena." Dini tried to sneak a suggestive hand gesture into that scene, but Fox caught it and ordered it removed.

Dini and Timm aren't unhappy with all the changes caused by moving the series to Saturday mornings.

"It did affect how they looked at the show," Timm said. "They want more action and less angst."

"So," Dini added, "less of Batman crying on gargoyles and replaying the Crime Alley murder."

"That's fine with me," Timm said.

Original Character for Show Wins Fans

She's cute.

She's spunky.

She's deadly.

She's Harley Quinn, the Joker's favorite henchwench.

Fans of *Batman: The Animated Series* were first introduced to the character of Harley Quinn in the episode *Joker's Favor*. Since that time, she has made appearances in three other episodes and had top billing in another. Now she is about to star in *Mad Love*, a 64-page special issue of *The Batman Adventures* , a comic book written by Paul Dini and illustrated by Bruce Timm.

On the eve of Harley's breakthrough into comics, her proud parents, Paul Dini and Bruce Timm, look back at their little girl's life: from a badly drawn sketch to the star of her own comic.

"Harley had been created as a secondary character for a show called *Joker's Favor*," Dini recalled. "I needed a girl to wheel in a cake in one scene."

Dini briefly considered other, less perky options. He considered having the Joker don a disguise, but quickly rejected the idea.

Then the inspiration for Harley struck him. "What if we do a twist," Dini thought, "harkening back to the Sixties, where the villain always had a girl with him?"

"The Joker is a pretty colorful personality," Dini mused. "He probably would have a girl or two around. A couple of girls who are into him the way a girl would be into a rock star, leading

Arleen Sorkin, the voice and model for Harley Quinn.

that kind of exciting life.

"I began working on the character a little bit," Dini said. "I decided to make her kind of funny. Kind of a clown in her own right. Somebody whom the Joker might get upset with if she got a better laugh than he did. That started to add a little twisted chemistry to what this character was to become. I started thinking of it as a sort of Punch-and-Judy sort of relationship.

"I was sort of stuck for a name," Dini admitted. "So, I started to rattle off a couple of names in my head. Somehow, Harley Quinn stuck because I was thinking of clowns, clown-like imagery, and carnivals. Then I took Harlequin and split it in two."

Having settled on a name, Dini then had to decide on a look for the character. "I started a little design of her. It looked nothing like the character looks now," Dini said. "In fact, it looked like a caricature of Arleen Sorkin, my good friend who plays Harley on the show, and whom I wanted to do the voice. I showed it to Bruce (Timm) and said, 'How 'bout something that looks like this?'"

According to Dini, Timm was not impressed. "He said, 'Well, it looks like a Sixties go-go girl. Also, it looks like your friend. As an artist, you're a very good writer.' And he threw the picture into his blackmail file where he keeps all the embarrassing drawings people do. They're not funny because they're humorous, they're funny because they're awful."

Timm then sat down and did sketches of his own. "He began doing these poses of her and doing these facial expressions," Dini said. "Very soon, he came up with the gal we have here. For which, we're all eternally grateful."

Along the way, Harley became more than just the girl who wheels in the cake. "She just sort of evolved into this personality," Dini said. "With all the other stories I did with her, she grew from being just the girl sidekick to having a personality on her own."

Bruce Timm agrees.

"She's really taken on a life of her own," Timm said. "It's really strange. It's neat. She's really grown as a character since we originated her."

Still, Harley was only meant to appear in one episode.

"She was really kind of a one shot," Timm said. "Paul just had this weird idea for a sidekick for the Joker. I thought, "Okay, she was funny and kind of cute and everything, but let's not do this again.' My feeling at the time was that it kind of took away from the Joker by giving him a girlfriend."

Thankfully, Dini wasn't ready to give up on the character.

Harley Quinn
(© 1993 Warner Brothers)

"Paul kept putting her back in scripts," Timm explained. "I would get a script and say, 'Paul, why is this Harley character in here again? Do we really need to see this obnoxious girl again?' But once we got *Joker's Favor* back and saw how much life she had on the screen, we thought, 'Hey, let's use this character. She really does come to life on the screen.'"

She does indeed have life on the screen. Many fans rate Harley as their favorite character created for the series.

"She's a good sidekick for the Joker," Dini said. "But, she's evolved into a player on her own. She's evolved into this manic, happy-go-lucky screwball type, who maybe, deep down, wants to do well. Or, at least wants to do well by herself. But, she doesn't care how she accomplishes that."

"I'm kind of sad that we're turning her into such a likable character," Timm said, "because I liked the early evil Harley. There was something really neat about her being so cute and so evil at the same time. There was all that stuff in *The Laughing Fish*, when the Joker is talking about feeding Bullock to the shark, and she's just so excited about it. She's really bloodthirsty and evil. But, at the same time, she's charming and appealing."

Timm and Dini cite *Harley and Ivy* as the episode that altered their view of the character. In that episode, Harley quits the Joker's gang and joins forces with Poison Ivy. The episode was of particular importance because it more fully defined Harley's relationship with the Joker

"That was the clincher show in terms of her development," Timm said. "I think it's because you see her with that ponytail. It softens her character a lot. It's really hard to think of her as being evil when she looks like Betty from the *Betty and Veronica* comics. That really changed how we started thinking about Harley.

"Also," Timm added, "That's the one show that really clinches that the Joker doesn't care about her. Even though he goes to all this trouble to track her down, it's not to get her back. it's to kill her. He really doesn't care about her one bit. He's interested in her only as long as he can use her. That's it."

"In a (second season) show called *Harlequinade*, Batman springs Harley from Arkham to find one of the Joker's hideouts," Dini said. "But, in the end, she comes to the Joker's rescue. It's revealed that he had an atomic bomb and he was going to set it off and he doesn't give a damn whether she was in Gotham or not. It's the last thing that's on his mind. When she shows up, he thinks, 'What are you doing here?'"

But even Harley wouldn't take this kind of abuse forever. Or would she?

"When Harley realizes that the Joker was

going to fry her and not care about it, she gets really mad," Timm said. "The Joker is escaping without her and she blows his plane up. She walks up to him and points a big gun in his face. He's actually begging her, 'Oh baby, sweetie, pumpkin pie, you wouldn't kill me would you?' She pulls the trigger. But, she's out of bullets. She's stunned."

Like many of Harley's fans, Dini and Timm have come to feel bad about the treatment she receives at the Joker's hands. Especially since they are responsible for it.

"All this time, she's been getting all this crap from the Joker," Timm said. "She's always leaving the Joker and when the Joker wants her back, she goes back in a minute. It really is a classic abusive relationship. We felt really bad about that. Especially after *Mad Love*, because she really takes a beating in Mad Love."

Even with all of the abuse Harley took in other shows, it was *The Man Who Killed Batman* episode that most bothered Dini.

In this episode, Batman is believed to be dead. So, the Joker robs a jewelry store as an experiment. If Batman shows up, he's alive and their game can continue. But, he doesn't show up. The Joker grows increasingly worried. Harley, meanwhile, is having the time of her life heisting diamonds. This infuriates the Joker, who slaps her and knocks her to the ground.

"I wrote that and didn't have any problems with it at all," Dini said. "It was boarded and Bruce directed the episode and I didn't have any problems with it at all. But, once it came back, and I saw it on film, I had a weird feeling. He'd shoved her around before and done little things to her before, but this was real violence. And I was thinking, 'I don't want to do that anymore.'"

Thus, Dini and Timm decided to do something nice for Harley.

"The Joker's not even in the last story we wrote for her (*Harley's Holiday*, to air sometime during the second season)," Dini said. "It's her on her first and only day of parole."

"We felt it would be nice to give her a happy ending," Timm said. Especially if *Harley's Holiday* is the last cartoon she appears in. We offered her a slight ray of hope."

Harley Makes it to the Four-Color Pages

Most characters start in the comics and then go to television.

Not Harley Quinn.

No, Harley did it backwards. Harley first appeared as a guest star in the *Joker's Favor* episode of *Batman: The Animated Series* and now stars in *Mad Love*, her very own 64-page special issue of *The Batman Adventures* comic book.

Fans of the animated series will not be surprised to learn that Harley is popular enough to be given her own comic. What may surprise them is that the issue is written by Paul Dini and illustrated by Bruce Timm. Dini and Timm are no strangers to Harley: they created her for the series.

How did Dini and Timm come to create the comic?

"Back when we started the show, Denny O'Neil was very impressed by the preliminary developments he had seen from Bruce (Timm), Eric Radomski and myself," Dini explained. "He kindly extended the offer to us. We thought about it, but we were too busy getting the show on at that time."

Once the show was on the air, it became an immediate hit with the fans. It was so popular, in fact, that its success prompted DC Comics to publish *The Batman Adventures*. The comic doesn't adapt the episodes of the television series, but instead chronicles Batman's adventures in the same style as the animated series.

"So," Dini continued, "it was about a year and a half later, Bruce and I were talking and we said, 'Hey, let's take Denny up on his offer and pitch him something.' So, that year, during the '92 San Diego Comic Convention, we took Denny to lunch and said, 'We have a story we'd like to do. It concerns Harley Quinn, the Joker's recurring henchwench.'"

During the first season of *Batman: The Animated Series*, Harley remained a mysterious character. Nothing of her past was revealed and her unhealthy attraction to the Joker was never explained. *Mad Love* will delve into Harley's sordid past and answer those questions.

"Bruce and I were talking about her over lunch one day," Dini said. "We asked ourselves, 'Where would she have come from? Why does she hang out with the Joker?' This little story about her evolved."

So who is Harley Quinn and why does she do these terrible things?

"She wanted to be one of those pop psychologists that make a fortune out there," Dini revealed. "Yeah, she was going to college and going to med school, but she was sleazing her way through. If she got a bad grade, she would see the professor after hours. Miraculously, her grade would turn into an 'A.' So, she completed med school in record time. She wanted to use her standing as a doctor to advance her career, and to become a personality in her own right, so she decided to go after the heavy-hitter psychos of Gotham City. The criminally insane inmates of Arkham Asylum. She never really counted on winding up as one of them. But, that's where her ambition led her."

In true Harley style, some of the ideas created for *Mad Love* appeared first in the series.

"A lot of the stuff that we originated for the comic ended up in the show because they were good ideas," Bruce Timm said. "Things like Harley calling the Joker 'Puddin.' That was written for the comic, but we used it in *The Laughing Fish* first."

And ideas from the comic will find their way into the series as well.

"In the second season episode *Trial* (in

Continued on Page 62

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Waterlogged: The Story of the Sub-Mariner Animated Cartoons

By Jim Korkis

In the mid-Sixties, Marvel Comics was establishing itself as a vibrant, popular comic book line that had captured the imagination of many readers. Also, in the mid-Sixties, animation companies were looking at adapting superheroes into animated series.

One of Marvel Comics' classic characters was Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner. The Sub-Mariner was the creation of William Blake "Bill" Everett, and first appeared in a small giveaway comic book entitled *Motion Picture Funnies Weekly* that had extremely limited distribution in 1939. This story was reprinted in *Marvel Comics* No. 1 later that year, and Sub-Mariner became the longest running Marvel character, and one of the few who survived into the present day from the Golden Age of Comics.

According to the comic book, in the early Twenties, an expedition to the Antarctic discovered a race of undersea people. The captain of the ship, Leonard McKenzie, fell in love with Princess Fen of these undersea people. The ship had been blasting its way through the ice with the result that the community of underwater people were being destroyed so they mounted a retaliatory raid. In the ensuing battle, the two lovers are forced apart, and the undersea race is decimated with the remaining survivors swearing eternal vengeance on the surface people. Princess Fen gives birth to a male child, the result of her liaison with McKenzie, and this child grows up to become Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner.

While Namor does help out the surface people during WWII, for the most of his comic book career, he is warring against the surface people. The character, after an absence of some years, popped up again 1962 when he was re-discovered by the Human Torch of the Fantastic Four. This re-appearance led to countless guest appearances in Marvel comics ranging from many issues of the *Fantastic Four* to the *Avengers* to *Daredevil*. Over these issues, the Sub-Mariner had to re-locate his lost people, re-establish himself as their king, and re-build the remnants of Atlantis.

The character was so popular that Marvel gave him his own series once again beginning with *Tales to Astonish* No. 70 (August 1965) in a story written by Stan Lee and drawn by Gene Colan (hiding his name under the pseudonym "Adam Austin," based on the names of his children). "Startling Spectacle! Peerless Pageantry! In the Famous Marvel Manner! We Bow to Your Demands! His Own Series....At Last! Prince Namor, The Sub-Mariner!" blazed the cover blurb for the issue. (Actually *Tales to Astonish* featured one Sub-Mariner story and one Incredible Hulk story).

Part of an original drawing for an unmade Sub-Mariner cartoon by Grantray-Lawrence. (© Marvel Comics and Grantray-Lawrence)

So, the Sub-Mariner was one of the most popular Marvel characters when Grantray-Lawrence decided to bring Marvel comics to animation. In fact, in 1966, it was expected that Marvel's rising circulation would hit 40 million copies sold. Robert Lawrence, a producer of films of TV commercials who also imported some Italian films to the American market in the late Forties and early Fifties, decided animation would have a bright future.

In 1954, he joined with two animators, Grant Simmons and Ray Patterson to form Grantray-Lawrence. In the mid-Sixties, they worked out a distribution deal with Krantz Films for the Marvel cartoons. Krantz Films was run by Steve Krantz, who at the time had just left being a program executive with NBC and Screen Gems to producer and distribute his own product. Krantz several years later would act as the producer of Ralph Bakshi's *Fritz the Cat* and the non-Bakshi *The Nine Lives of Fritz the Cat.*

"One of the secrets of Marvel's success is its ability to draw action right into its panels. Marvel's art is like no other penciling in comics, because its artists and production understand the principle of arrested motion,

" claimed Robert Lawrence in a 1966 interview. "Iron Man doesn't just stand there. He tenses or relaxes or jumps or recoils. The characters don't actually move, and yet their actions seem to flow, catching the reader up in a current of activity. Since we wanted to retain this flow for our film, we decided to let their artists carry the ball — and the viewer — just as they do their own readers."

What this meant was that the animation was truly limited in every sense of the word. Most of the animation drawings were taken directly from the Marvel comic books themselves. Offset copies of the artwork were made, word balloons and captions were removed, and the backgrounds changed or deleted. Sometimes parts of hands or heads or other items had to be added by staff artists because they were cut off in the original comic book panel. Then the picture or some individual element (such as Captain America's shield) would be jiggled or the camera would zoom in and out and pan across quickly all in an attempt to create the illusion of movement.

"We were fortunate to have such fantastic art with work with," said Ray Patterson in 1966." In blowing up these drawings to 18 by 14 " in order to do touch ups on them, we found very little that our artists had to tinker with. Let's face it, the comic book created the illusion of action very successfully. We merely helped it along a little."

An interesting sidenote is that Grantray-Lawrence claimed they were inspired to take this approach because of the the strength of the artwork of Jack Kirby. One animator stated," Reading a Kirby story is like looking at 3-D without special glasses."

Grantray-Lawrence chose five of the most popular Marvel characters: Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, Sub-Mariner and the Hulk. (Both Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four were optioned elsewhere.) They made thirteen half-hours for each character, and each half-hour was divided into three separate cliff-hanging segments so this made for a total of 195 six-minute cartoons. The budget was between $15,000.00 to $20,000.00 for each half-hour. All the cartoons were in color. There were approximately 48 layout artists who were responsible for converting the comics to animation including Mike Royer, who at that time was just finishing his stint as one of Russ Manning's assistants, and who today is actively involved as an artist for Disney merchandising.

The cartoons were designed so that one segment could be shown a day in a serial format with a live-action host or all three segments could be shown in a one block, framed by the Merry Marvel Marching Society theme song:

Meet the bulky, kinda sulky, kinda Hulky, superhero,

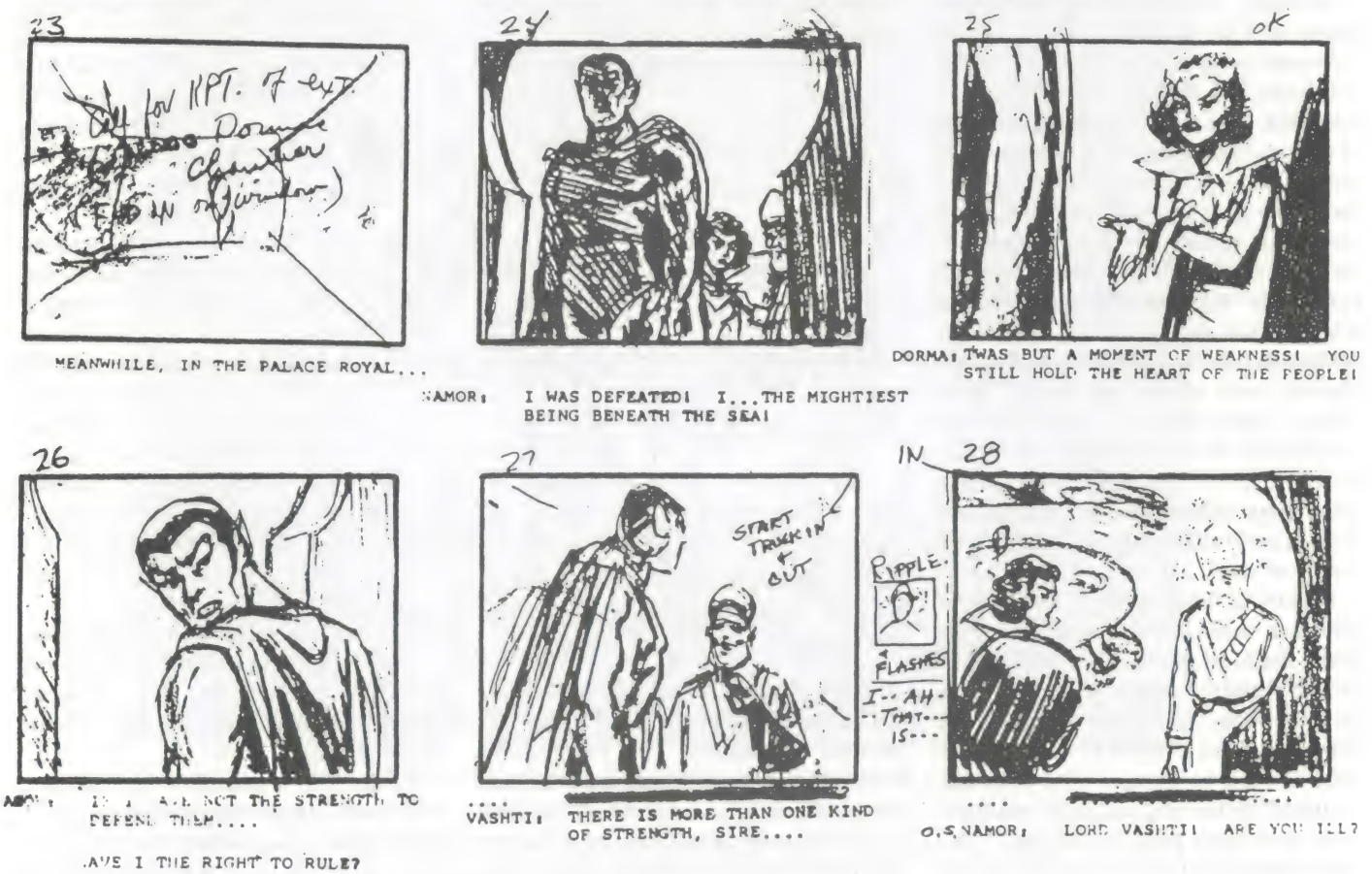
Altruistic and electrically transitorized superhero,

And exotically neurotic and aquatic superhero,

The Marvel Super Heroes have arrived!

Super powers from their foreheads to their toes,

Watch them change their very shape before your nose.



Here's an example of a Grantray-Lawrence storyboard for the series.(© Marvel Comics and Grantray-Lawrence)

See our cane-striking super hero change to Viking superheroes,

The Marvel Superheroes have arrived!

"In most animation work," stated Robert Lawrence," the music and sound effects are caricatures to match the art. For our program, we ruled out pops, whistles and pings. In their place, we have a carefully executed score with the kind of music you might hear in a feature film."

It is hard to accept that comment without irony when listening to the Sub-Mariner's individual theme song:

Stronger than a whale,
He can swim anywhere,
He can breathe underwater,
Or go flying through the air,
The noble Sub-Mariner is the prince of the sea,
So be wary every demon,
'Cause Namor of Atlantis is the prince of the sea!

Actually, the Sub-Mariner adventures proved to be the most difficult for Grantray-Lawrence because since the series really only began with *Tales to Astonish* No. 70 for mid-1965, there were only a limited number of stories to adapt in their special style. To makes matters worse, Gene Colan's distinctive art syle proved to be a little too distinctive. According to one source lose to the show, much of the Sub-Mariner artwork had to be significantly re-drawn to accommodate the xerography technique. Additional original adventures of the Sub-Mariner were created by having Doug Wildey, Sparky Moore and other staffers at the studio do sketches that could be used in a similar fashion to the Marvel comics panels. Artist Jerry Grandenetti did at least one original storyboard for the Sub-Mariner that was never used.

Looking at the episodes, it's evident the animation studio had access to comic book stories due to be printed at the beginning of 1967, and adapted those stories even before the comic books featuring them hit the stands. (Since the series debuted in September of 1966, it must be assumed that animation continued for the next couple of months to make use of some these later stories.) Voice work was done in Canada, and some scenes were stretched by using lots of dialogue.

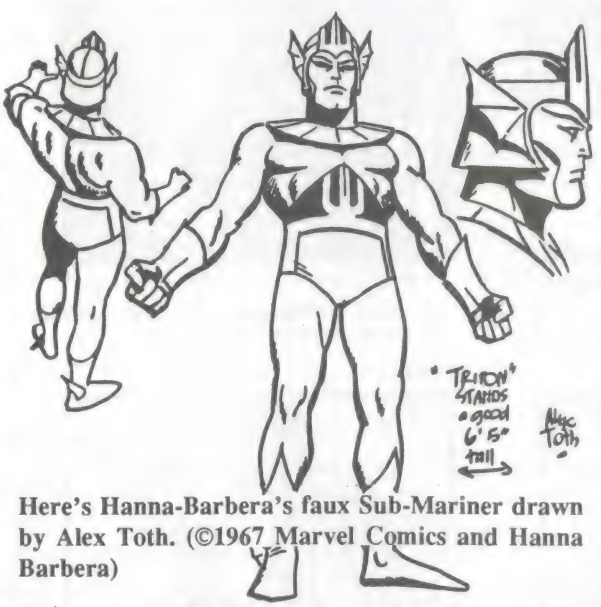
This series of Marvel superhero cartoons has been released to home video, and can still be found in many larger video rental stores. GMD

In an attempt to find more material for Sub-Mariner stories, the studio even tried to adapt some of the adventures that has appeared in the *Fantastic Four* comic books that had re-introduced the character to readers of the Sixties.

Unfortunately, this caused a problem, because Hanna-Barbera had optioned the rights to the Fantastic Four, and had hoped to use the characters to cash in on the high ratings, and financial success being enjoyed by Filmation with the *New Adventures of Superman*. So, the main characters had to substituted, and the stories twisted in an attempt to still find a usable story for the Sub-Mariner.

The Hanna-Barbara series debuted in 1967, and they wanted to use a classic story of the Fantastic Four battling the Sub-Mariner. But because the character was still optioned by Grantray-Lawrence, it was Hanna-Barbera's turn to try to substitute main characters and twist a story.

The Hanna-Barbera episode was entitled "Danger in the Depths," and was adapted from *Fantastic Four* No. 33 "Side by Side with the Sub-Mariner." The flesh-colored Prince Namor of Atlantis became the blue-skinned Prince Triton of Pacifica. Like most if the H-B story adaptations for the series, the episode was a simplified re-telling of the original story in which the Fantastic Four go to rescue an undersea kingdom and its ruler from the invading army of the evil Attuma.



Here's Hanna-Barbera's faux Sub-Mariner drawn by Alex Toth. (©1967 Marvel Comics and Hanna Barbera)

Strangely, Lady Dorma (Sub-Mariner's girlfriend) and Attuma were able to keep their names in both the H-B and Grantray-Lawrence versions.

When DePatie-Freleng produced their *New Adventures of the Fantastic Four* in 1978, they were unable to use Sub-Mariner because the character had been optioned by CBS for a live-action series. The failure of both NBC's *The Man From Atlantis* and CBS's own *Return of Captain Nemo* convinced the network not to further develop the project.

In a Sixties interview, writer Stan Lee, who was responsible for Sub-Mariner's re-appearance in Marvel comics, seemed pleased with how Grantway-Lawrence was handling the Sub-Mariner and other Marvel heroes in animation. At the time, he gushed, "They've been an absolute joy to work with. They check with us on everything, and they're tremendously anxious to keep with the spirit of our strips and stories. I couldn't be more satisfied with what they've been doing. They're trying their best to keep it in the style, for better or worse, the style we have in our books...I'm delighted with that. I wouldn't have been happy if it were animated like, you known, like Mickey Mouse...just like regular animation."

Lee was also pleased that Grantray-Lawrence was sending him the storyboard to check to make sure they were still in the spirit of the original comic books. "(The original stories) have been changed to some degree because some of them aren't complete in themselves. And the animation studio has to change the ending," commented Lee at the time. " It had to seem as if it's a complete episode."

Within a year, Lee would be telling comic book convention audiences that the series was a "mistake," and that Marvel should have been actively involved with the show.

At the 1967 comic book convention in New York, Lee told the gathered fans that," We are having trouble with the TV shows.

Continued on Page 62

The Art of the Storyboard

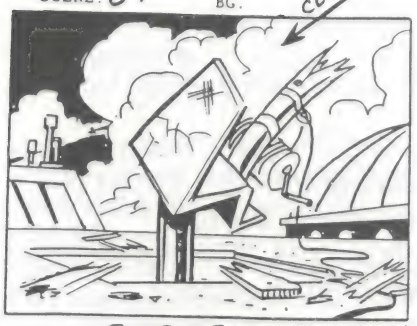
The storyboard is a means of writing a film and planning its production which began in animation and has spread throughout the film industry. **ANIMATO!** launches a semi-regular feature in this issue, "The Art of the Storyboard." With the production of many animated films divided between various animation studios, the storyboard (along with model sheets and layouts) must be a strong guide to insure what the writer and director of a film actually wanted is accomplished by a team of animators frequently half-a-globe away. Storyboards vary according the creative process on a production, and they reveal much on how an animated film is created

In this issue, we present a look at how the Disney Studio in its prime worked on a storyboard, and then a partial storyboard from "The Laughing Fish," from *Batman: The Animated Series*.

GMD

The legendary Carl Barks (left) and Harry Reeves present a storyboard for the 1938 cartoon *Good Scout*. Individual drawings representing the flow of the narrative were literally pinned up on the wall, and the writers would act out the dialogue. (© Walt Disney Studios)

SCENE. C-89 BG. CLOUDS



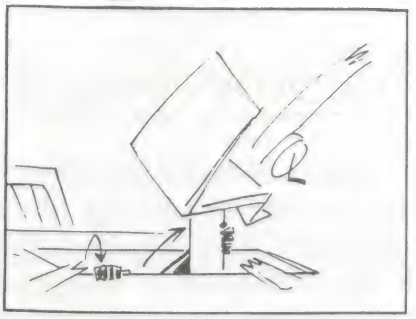
ACTION ROOFTOP: BROKEN POLE JUTS OUT OF SKY-LIGHT

DIAL.

89 TRANS. HOLD BG. | HAND IN 8X

SLUGS 24X

SCENE. CONT. BG.



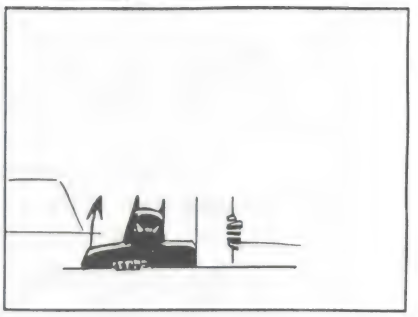
ACTION BATMAN'S HANDS IN --

DIAL.

TRANS. GRABS ROOFTOP 6X | HAND N 8X | GRABS POLE 6X | PULLS UP 16X

SLUGS 6X

SCENE. CONT. BG.



ACTION --LIFTS HEAD UP

DIAL.

TRANS. CUSH 8X

SLUGS

SLOW PAN CLOUDS

4/12

SCENE. C-90 BG.

ACTION JOKER STAGGERS AWAY FROM THE WRECK --

DIAL. JOKER: HA HA HA HA

90 TRANS.

WIND BLOWS

SLUGS NOTE: THRUOUT ENTIRE ROOFTOP SEQUENCE, (SC'S 89-110)

16X SL 8X SL 12X SL 12X SL 8X SL

BATMAN'S SHADOW IN

DIAL 167

SCENE. CONT. BG.

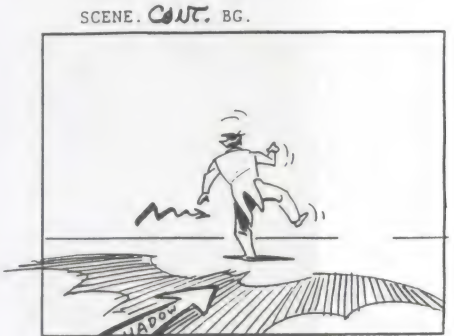
ACTION

DIAL. HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

TRANS.

SLUGS HOPS on LEFT FOOT

SCENE. CONT. BG.



ACTION BATMAN'S SHADOW RUSHES IN!

DIAL. HA HA HA

TRANS.

SLUGS

SCENE. C-91 BG.

ACTION BATMAN SILO. DROPS INTO SC. BEHIND JOKER..

DIAL. JOKER (CONT):
..HA HA HA HA HA

TRANS. 8X | BATMAN INTO SC 12X | SETTLES 12X

SLUGS STEPS FWD 16X (5D) 8X (6L) 8X (5T)

CONT DIAL 167

SCENE. CONT. BG.

ACTION JOKER NOTICES..

DIAL.

HOLD SILO TRANS.

SLUGS REACTS UP 6X | Cush Pose 10X | HOLD DOXG 24X

3

SCENE. CONT. BG.

ACTION .. SPINS AROUND..

DIAL.

TRANS. Whips Around 8X

SLUGS

SCENE. C-92 BG.

ACTION BATMAN'S P.O.V.
JOKER WHIRLS AROUND, STARTLED BUT HATEFUL

C92 DIAL.

TRANS. CONT TURN 8X | Cush 12X | HOLD 4X

SLUGS

8

SCENE. C-93 BG.

ACTION JOKER'S P.O.V.
BATMAN ANTICS BACK

C93 DIAL.

TRANS. ANTC BACK 12X | Cush 4X

SLUGS

10

SCENE. C-94 BG.

ACTION

C94 DIAL.

TRANS. 6X SWINGS | Hits 2X | & FOLLOW THRU BATMAN 12X

SLUGS

8X

TRACK USE FIRST TAKE

DIAL 168

SCENE C-94 CONT. BG.

DIAL. JOKER: (IMPACT GRUNT!)

TRANS. JOKER SAILS OUT 10X | O.S. 2X

SLUGS

ACTION

SCENE C-95 BG.

LIGHTNING FLASH BEHIND CLOUDS

ACTION JOKER FALLS BACKWARD..

DIAL.

TRANS. SAILS BACK | LANDS 4X | SLIGHT SQUASH 8X

SLUGS 16X

SCENE. CONT. BG.

ACTION "LANDS NEXT TO A BOX OF TOOLS, GLARES AT BATMAN A MOMENT

DIAL.

TRANS. + SETTLES 12X | HOLD GLARING 24X

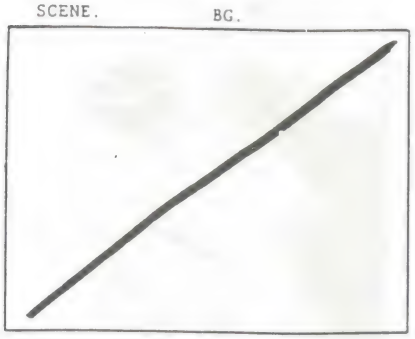
SLUGS

4X LIGHTNING FLASH 16X | + FX DISSIPATE 16X

CONT DIAL 16X

C95 = 4"

SCENE. BG.

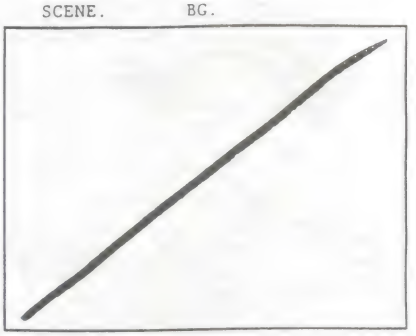


ACTION

SCENE C-96 BG.

ACTION JOKER TURNS TO TOOLBOX, SEES BIG WRENCH..

SCENE. BG.



ACTION

DIAL.

TRANS.

SLUGS

C96 HOLD

DIAL.

TRANS. GLANCES BACK 12X | CUSH 4X | HOLD 24X

SLUGS 8X | REACTS W/ BIG SMILE 6X | CUSH POSE 10X

DIAL.

TRANS.

SLUGS

C96 = 2 12

SCENE. C-97 BG.

SCENE. BG.

PAN CLOUDS

SCENE. CONT. BG.

TRANS. JOKER GRABS WRENCH, STANDS --

TRANS.

-- ANTICS BACK AS LIGHTNING FLASHES! SFX: KA-BOOM!

TRANS.

97

SLUGS | LEANS N REACH 12X → | O.S. GRABS 8X | ARTE 8X | STANDS UP 16X

SLUGS SWINGS WRENCH BACK IN 3 16 ARTE 16X →

SLUGS

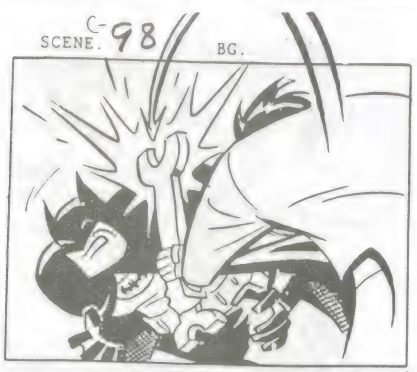
LIGHTNING FLASH 16X

BATMAN STEPS 16X (SL) 16X (SL) 16X to STOP

CROUCHES DOWN 12X

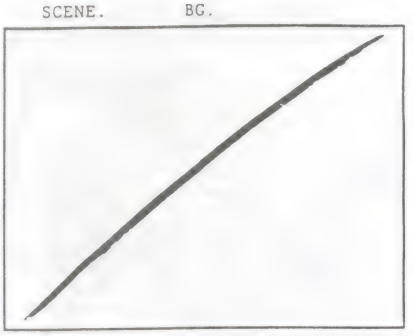
312

SCENE. C-98 BG.



SCENE. CONT. BG.

SCENE. BG.



ACTION JOKER HITS BATMAN ON SHOULDER

ACTION STUNNED, HE FALLS TO HIS KNEES

ACTION

98

DIAL. BATMAN: (GRUNT!)

DIAL. JOKER: MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE WRENCH!

DIAL.

TRANS. SWINGS 6X | HITS 4X | CRINGES 6X | FALLS TO KNEES 16X

TRANS. JOKER INTO POSE ↑

TRANS.

SLUGS BATMAN START TO REACH UP →

FOLLOW THRU JOKER

SLUGS Cush

SLUGS

THIS IS TAKE 1 + CUT TAKE 2

10X DIAL 170 4X DIAL 169

SCENE. C-99 BG.

SCENE. BG.

SCENE. BG.

JOKER: AND SINCE MY SIDE-SPLITTERS DON'T TICKLE YOU--

JOKER ANTS

SLUGS WRENCH BACK

C99

BATMAN COWERS IN CRINGE

DIAL 171

SCENE. C-99 CONT. BG.

ACTION JOKER ANTICS BACK

DIAL. (CONT.): --HOW ABOUT A SKULL-SPLITTER?

TRANS. ANTS

SLUGS SWINGS WRENCH UP

CONT DIAL 171

SCENE. C-100 BG.

ACTION JOKER SWINGS WRENCH DOWN..

C100

DIAL.

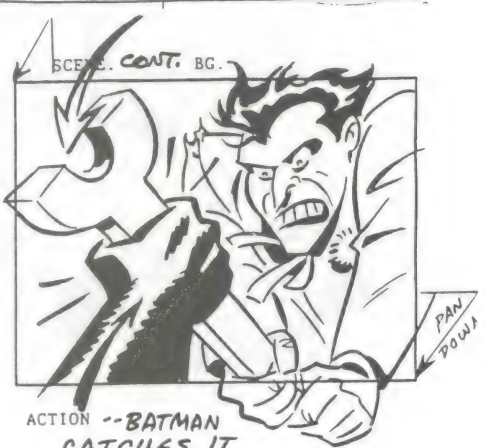
TRANS. SWINGS WRENCH DOWN 6X

SLUGS HAND IN 2X

DIAG PAN 36

10

SCENE. CONT. BG.



ACTION --BATMAN CATCHES IT, STOPS IT IN MID-AIR!

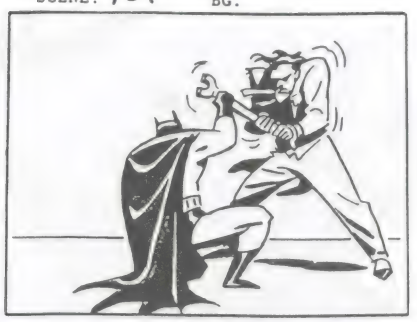
DIAL.

TRANS. GRABS WRENCH 4X

CONT STRAIN IN PUSHING DOWN 16X

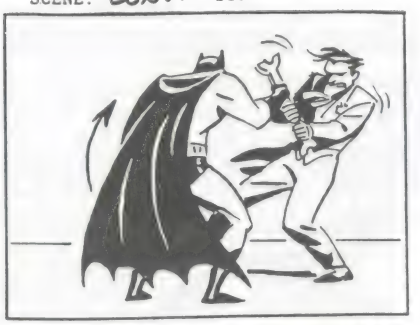
SLUGS

SCENE. C-101 w/o 99 BG.



ACTION JOKER TRIES TO PULL WRENCH FREE--

SCENE. CONT. BG.



ACTION BATMAN GETS TO HIS FEET--

SCENE. C-102 BG.

ACTION BATMAN'S LEFT HAND IN, GRABS WRENCH--

101 DIAL.

TRANS. BATMAN ANTC 8X	WHO DID PUSH UP 16X	+ STANDS 8X

SLUGS

DIAL.

TRANS. CONT STRAW 16X

SLUGS

C102 DIAL.

TRANS. 4X	+ HAND IN 6X	GRABS WRENCH 4X	CONT STRAWS 16X

SLUGS

CONT. STRAWS 16

3 14

5 14

SCENE. C-102 CONT. BG.

ACTION --TWISTS IT OUT OF JOKER'S GRASP!

SCENE. CONT. BG.

ACTION JOKER TURNS AND RUNS!

SCENE. C-103 BG.

ACTION JOKER RUNS--

DIAL.

TRANS. BATMAN ANTC 6X	+ TWISTS WRENCH 10X	JOKER LETS GO 4X	REACTS 6X

SLUGS

+ SWINGS WRENCH O.S. 8X

DIAL.

TRANS. 10X	+ CUSH TURNS TO RUN 12X	+ GOES 1CX	O.S. 4X

SLUGS

6X	BATMAN IN 12X	CUSH 4X	HOD

C103 DIAL. RUNS FORWARD

TRANS. 6X	12X	12X	WORKS TWO 12X

SLUGS

2 12

SCENE. 103 CONT. BG.

ACTION -- TEETERS ON THE EDGE!

DIAL. JOKER: WHOA!

TRANS.

SLUGS TO STOP IN PLACE | WOBBLES IN PLACE

DIAL 172

SCENE. 104 BG.

ACTION JOKER'S P.O.V.

C104

DIAL.

TRANS. WATER/WAVE FXS

SLUGS

10

3°

SCENE. 105 BG.

ACTION JOKER TURNS BACK TO HIS NEMESIS

C105

DIAL. BATMAN: THERE'S NO PLACE LEFT TO GO, JOKER! | ANTIC | CUSH | TURNS

TRANS. CAPE WAVES 16X CYCLE

SLUGS HOLD JOKER

DIAL 173

SCENE. 106 BG.

ACTION JOKER GLARES --

106 DIAL. HOLD JOKER GLARES

TRANS. EVIL EXPR. 2°

SLUGS | BLINK 4X |

TRACK CUT LINES 174 + 175

SCENE. CONT. BG.

ACTION -- SUDDENLY, SMILES AND SHRUGS --

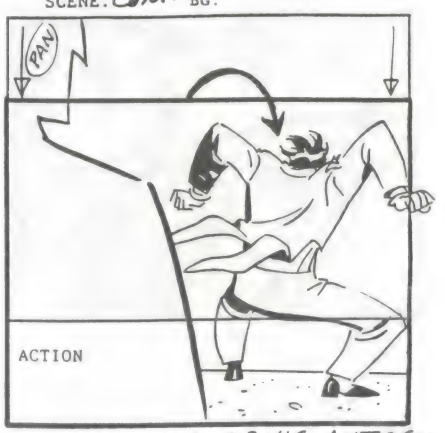
DIAL. ANTIC | INTO SLOW | CUSH | HOLD POSE

TRANS. 6X | SHRUG 16X | 8X | 24X

SLUGS | B16 SMILE

6 IN

SCENE. CONT. BG.



ACTION

PAN DOWN AS HE ANTICS --

DIAL. ANTIC DOWN IN TURN | LEANS UP | DROPS DOWN 03

TRANS. 8X | 16X

SLUGS | 4Y | 12Y

PAN B6 16X

BATMAN REACTS 6X | CUSH 10X

DIAL 176

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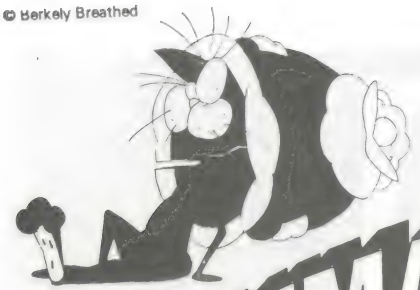

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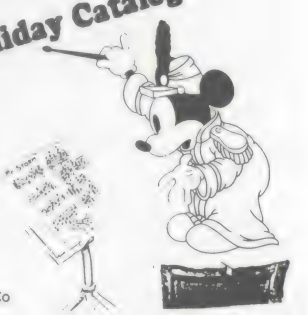

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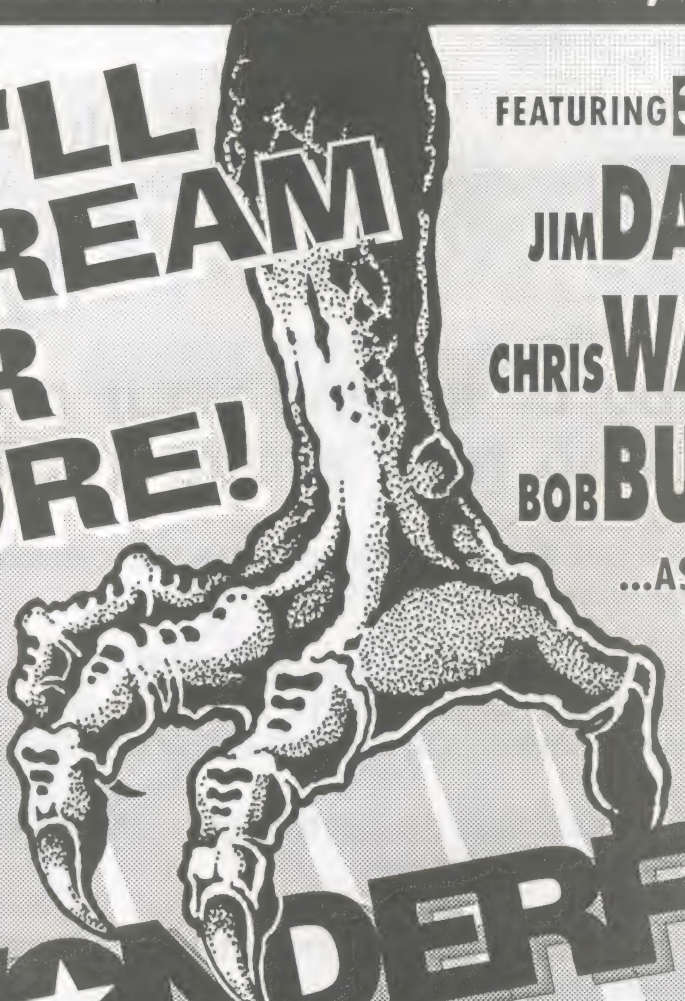

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An ANIMATO! Film Review:

The Nightmare Before Christmas

By Stephen R. Bissette

Ho! Ho! Ho! What a Christmas gift for animation lovers!

Hot on the heels of *Jurassic Park* (which many argued was the death-knell for stop-motion animation in feature films) comes Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, reaffirming the artistic and commercial potential of model animation as a medium when embraced on its own unique terms. This dense and delightful model-animated feature has already proven to be one of the fall season's bona fide boxoffice hits (with about $40 million in profits projected as of Thanksgiving weekend, as reported in *Entertainment Weekly*, Nov. 26, 1993, pg. 15-16), vindicating the Disney Studios' investment in what is undoubtedly their most experimental animated feature since *Fantasia* (1940).

It should also vindicate Tim Burton's stature with studio management who hadn't a clue what to make of misfit Burton's previous efforts for Disney, the short films *Vincent* (1982) and *Frankenweenie* (1984). Disney brass had consigned them both to premature burial, prompting Burton to leave Disney for greener pastures with *Pee Wee's Big Adventure* (1985), and all that followed. Though Burton's post-*Batman* fame eventually earned *Frankenweenie* a quiet video release (apparently in slightly truncated form, according to Charles Kilgore of *Ecco* magazine), *Vincent* remains a rarely-screened delight, though it is in every way a blueprint for *Nightmare*'s flavor and design. In fact, *Vincent* would have made an ideal companion short and a most timely seasonal valentine to the memory of the late Vincent Price. Now that *Nightmare* has proven Burton's status as a money-making brand-name creator (even though he did *not* direct this project), perhaps the video release of *Nightmare* will provide a showcase for Vincent (are you listening, Disney?)

Vincent Price's distinctive voice is sadly missing for *Nightmare*'s opening narration introducing us to the film's secular holiday-based universe, which suffers without the iconic vocal authority of Price or his peers (Boris Karloff, whose narration lent so much to Chuck Jones and Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, 1966, or Burl Ives, who lent charm to Arthur Rankin Jr. and Jules Bass' *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, 1967, two of the animated Christmas standards Burton sought to emulate here.) Thankfully, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* never again relies on its narrator and these pallid opening moments quickly fade.

Director Henry Selick and his creative collaborators fully engage us once we plunge headlong into Halloween Town via Danny Elfman's rousing opening number, "This is Halloween." With few lapses (most of which have to do with the ambitious operatic score), *The Nightmare before Christmas* keeps its heady witch's brew bubbling, creating an evocative and compelling imaginative universe realized with the remarkable panache and scope we associate with animation classics like *Pinocchio* (1940), *Yellow Submarine* (1968) and *Akira* (1989).

Two animators work on the scene which has become a signature for the film. (© Touchstone Pictures. All Rights Reserved)

The story, as such, is properly story-book simplistic: Jack Skellington, the Pumpkin King, is tired of the ages-old Halloween routine he lords over. Aching for change, he literally stumbles into Christmas Town, and decides to pirate the holiday as his own. The ensuing mayhem is best discovered in the film itself, inventively realized with intoxicating clarity and willfully grotesque detail.

The animation is remarkably fluid throughout, with seamless application of the Puppetoon's method of using replacement heads and features (note the Mayor's cleverly-designed Janus-face, wherein the individual components can be altered: eyes, nose, mouth). The animation on Jack and the autumn leaf-filled Sally is exquisite; Sally's expressive face and body language is particularly moving, a rich characterization from beginning to end compromised only by her show-stopping dirge of a song. The Evil Scientist is also quite memorable for his Dr. Strangelove presence, brain fetishism (culminating in a delightfully perverse punchline as he crafts yet another 'perfect mate'), and the duck-like exaggerated lips (which used to be stereotypical of Nelvana Studio's villains from *The Devil and Daniel*

Mouse, 1978, to Iggy Pop's surrogate in *Rock and Rule*,1984).

Though some critics have dismissed *Nightmare* as an empty exercise in technique, Selick has brought Burton's characters and concepts to the screen with considerable wit and charm. The only moments where invention flags are those with the civil authorities during the climax: the briefly glimpsed policemen and news announcers could have stepped out of any *Davey and Goliath* episode (and the only animation error of note was spotted by fellow **ANIMATO!** contributor Mark Martin: when the howitzers are being fired at airborne Jack, the soldiers manning the cannons simply disappear after the first barrage!)

The lunatic populace of Halloween Town creeps, crawls and flutters through almost every frame, embodying *Nightmare*'s roots in the pioneer efforts of Wladislaw Starewicz (the devil, the baby ghoul with stitched eyes, and the forlorn trio of musicians particularly recall characters from *The Mascot*, 1933) and a pantheon of folk monsters evocative of the Universal Studio's rogues gallery. While a few critics reviewing *Nightmare* recalled the link between the usually vapid Rankin-Bass TV specials, they seemed blissfully ignorant of the specifically European (and, in the case of the Universal monsters, mock-European) expressionistic fantasies *The Nightmare Before Christmas* draws upon. From flamboyant 18th and 19th Century illustrators to model animators like Starewicz and George Pal to the overt Kurt Weill influence on Elfman's score, Halloween Town reeks of "The Old Country" distilled into an eerie, idyllic netherworld that is endearingly familiar and resonant.

The repetitive claim that *Nightmare* is "the first" stop-motion animated feature is also frustratingly myopic, again ignoring Starewicz and Russian director Aleksandr Ptushko's achievements as well as Rankin-Bass productions such as *Willie McBean and his Magic Machine* (1965), *The Daydreamer* (1966), *Mad Monster Party* ? (1967) and Will Vinton's marvelous *The Adventures of Mark Twain* (1985). It is also interesting to note that another sorely neglected American stop-motion feature of this scope was mounted for an opera steeped in European lore, Michael Myerberg's ambitious *Hansel and Gretel* (1954).

Make no mistake, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is an animated opera, and despite the commercially-viable propriety granted author-creator Tim Burton in the movie's titles - a first of sorts for Disney, if one excludes "Jules Verne's" fleeting masthead status in the 1950s and early 1960s - this would seem to be significantly Danny Elfman's opera. Indeed there are as many meaningful connections to Elfman's *ouevre* as Burton's, particularly if Elfman's delightful collaboration with brother Richard Elfman's *Forbidden Zone* (1980) is remembered. The Cab Calloway trademarks personifying *Nightmare*'s grand villain Oogie Boogie are lifted from *Forbidden Zone*'s perverse appropriation and re-invention of a distinctly Fleischer Studio's universe, right down to the African-American caricature: souped-up libido, rolling bones and all. Elfman's score carries the film (Elfman also sings Jack's songs), and occasionally lets it down as well: as good as "This is Halloween," What's This?" and Lock, Shock and Barrel's "The Scheming Song" are, a few numbers are almost shapeless ("The Town Meeting Song," "Poor Jack"), and "Sally's Song stops the movie dead in its tracks. The Weillian influence thankfully gives way to Elfman's own musical invention and a wider palette (i.e. the Cab Calloway inspired "You're Joking"; one wishes "Sally's Song" had embraced Billy Holiday-style blues).

If anything, Elfman's score is overly rich at times, overwhelmingly - even monotonously - so. The insistent drive and repetitive carny flourishes occasionally dull rather than enhance the equally dense orchestration of visual wonders, and the sound mix that aggressively favors the orchestra over the character's voices (as in the climatic "Poor Jack") is also exhausting. With time, Elfman could mature into a film composer worthy of his hero Bernard Herrmann, and there's no doubt that *The Nightmare Before Christmas* will remain an important achievement in Elfman's career.

Sadly, some sources report that *Nightmare* may by the last collaboration between Elfman and Burton, who (excluding Elfman's work on *Forbidden Zone* and Burton's contributions to Disney's *The Black Cauldron*, 1985) essentially started their feature film careers together with *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*; if this is true, one hopes it is at least an artistic rather than egocentric decision, and that both will find equally fertile possibilities with other creators.

Tim Burton's *The Nightmare before Christmas* is, despite its flaws, a landmark in animation history. It proves that a unique and unusual dimensionally-animated feature can attract a large mainstream audience, and hold them spellbound. Tim Burton, Danny Elfman, Henry Selick and crew have crafted the finest Christmas gift the medium could ever wish for, full of promise for the many New Years ahead.

Stephen R. Bissette is a regular contributor to ANIMATO!. His popular comic book mini- series, *1963* (along with Alan Moore and Rick Veitch) recently came to a conclusion, and he is now hard to work on his new comic book project, *Tyrant*, the birth, life and death of a Tyrannosaurus.

The Nightmare Before Christmas : An Old Style Returns

By G. Michael Dobbs

Somewhere, I hope George Pal is smiling.

The success of *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas* has brought the kind of animation made popular by Pal over 50 years ago back into the spotlight.

Just a few months ago, the smash success of *Jurassic Park* led many people to believe that stop-motion animation as most of us know it was now as dead as..well...a dinosaur. I have to admit the effects of *Jurassic Park* gave me pause. Could movie-goers accept something less than what they saw there...a high-tech combination of computer animation, puppetry, and life-size automations?

Well, perhaps what *Jurassic Park* did do was to kill the low-budget dino movie (one of my guiltiest pleasures), but thankfully not destroy the continuing potential of "old fashioned" stop-motion animation.

But why all this affection for stop-motion? Animation is the "purest" form of cinema because it can be indeed the work of a single artist. Economically speaking, though, it's not practical for cel animation to have that kind of artistic "purity" in the mass market.

The very nature of stop-motion allows itself to continue to be identified as the achievement of one person. We describe a film as a "Willis O'Brien picture" or a "Ray Harryhausen movie." Even though some animators used assistants, the animation in stop-motion pictures have been historically the work of primarily a single artist.

The Nightmare Before Christmas, because it is completely stop-motion, does break with the this precedent. Economics dictated a veritable platoon of animators be used in order to create the film on schedule. More importantly, though, *Nightmare* also breaks with the overall stop-motion tradition of creating something to look "real." Audiences thrilled to King Kong because he was made to look like a an actual living entity. Ray Harryhausen, Jim Danforth and Phil Tippet have all been celebrated for their ability to give obviously unreal entities the illusion of life.

Director Michael Anderson (center) discusses a point with the late George Pal (right) on the set of Pal's last movie, *Doc Savage...The Man of Bronze* in 1975.

The only stop-motion animator in America to make a career of presenting highly stylized films was the late George Pal. The *Nightmare* crew owe much to both Pal and the pioneering Russian animator Wladislaw Starewicz. Both men frequently used models which were less articulated than the models of Harryhausen and O'Brien. Their point was not to make their subjects look real, but to fulfill a stylized artistic vision.

George Pal brought his type of animation from his native Europe, and he perfected a kind of stop-motion animation that was unique in this country. Supplementing his articulated models, Pal would also create a series of stiff models representing a sequence of movements. To animate facial expressions, Pal would fashion a series of heads with varying expressions which would be replaced. Pal's crew would create intricate sets for his shorts, and the films would also boast of outstanding musical scores.

His short subjects were dubbed "Puppetoons," and were released by Paramount during the late 1930s and into the 1940s. Every year from 1941 to 1947, one of Pal's Puppetoons received an Academy Award nomination, but unfortunately he was never honored with an Oscar. *Tubby The Tuba*, *Tulips Shall Grow*, *Rhythm in the Ranks*, *And to Think I saw it on Mulberry Street* are among his best shorts.

Besides his musical fantasies, Pal worked with the legendary children's author Dr. Seuss on adaptations of several of Seuss' books. The closest Pal got to creating a star from his shorts was the character of "Jasper," an African-American caricature which some people might find offensive today.

When Pal made his move into features in the late 1940s, live-action science fiction and fantasy became his trademark. Sadly, many fantasy film fans familiar with *War of the Worlds*, *The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao*, and *The Time Machine*, among others, aren't aware of Pal's great contribution to animation.

Pal's techniques were used by the Rankin-Bass team in a series of animated feature films, and, more memorably, a number of

television specials which are still broadcast after more than 25 years, and now sold on home video. Technique is the only element shared by *Nightmare* and the Rankin-Bass productions. Made strictly to a general formula (a sentimental holiday theme, possible tie-in with an existing song, "hosted" by an established media personality), these shows were never as well-animated as the Pal productions nor were they ever as imaginatively conceived. The irony is that until the release of *Nightmare* on home video, the Rankin-Bass productions, such as *Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer*, are the easiest examples to find of this kind of animation. Some of Pal's shorts are contained on the *Puppetoon Movie* video release (I.V.E., 1986) which can still be found in larger video rental outlets. One hopes the success of *Nightmare* persuades the owner of the Pal shorts to strike a deal for their release.

Burton used some of Pal's techniques when he animated *Vincent*, his acclaimed Disney short subject which has never been officially released. A wonderful tribute to the late Vincent Price, *Vincent* told the story of a young boy who wanted to be just like the horror film star. Shot in moody black and white, and featuring a narration by Price, *Vincent* was a film the Disney management obviously did not understand and believed they could not market. Hopefully, they understand there is *now* a very large market for this film.

While at Disney, Burton developed the idea and characters for *Nightmare* which sat in a file cabinet until his string of boxoffice successes convinced the Disney powers-that-be to resurrect the concept.

And thank goodness. With fellow superstar director Stephen Spielberg producing pseudo-Disney syrupy drivel, Burton is carrying on a tradition of individual style and expression that is both wonderfully refreshing and vital to the animation industry.

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***Eek! the Cat* Episode Guide (First Season)** ("I" indicates the introduction of a major character.)

Misereek - Eek, feeling unappreciated at home, runs away to live with a sweet old lady who nearly kills him with kindness when she accidentally takes him to the zoo instead of the vet. This writer believes that "Misereek" may possibly be the funniest cartoon ever made for television. (I: Eek, Wendy Elizabeth, J.B., The Old Lady and her cat Mittens.)

Bearz in the Hood - When Wendy Elizabeth is home sick, Eek goes to the mall to get an autographed photo of her favorite TV stars, the Squishy Bearz. Unfortunately, Eek and the Bearz all wind up fugitives when a gang of rats disguise themselves as the Bearz in a plot to hold the mayor's statue for ransom. (I: Squishy Bearz.)

Catsanova - A lovely 200 lb. cat named Annabelle moves next door, and Eek falls in love. However, thanks to the deadly shark dog that shares her home, Eek needs the help of a nerdy, one-winged Cupid (voiced by Buck Henry) to meet her. Cupid's glad to help: If Eek kisses Annabelle, he'll earn his other wing. (I: Annabelle, Sharkey the Shark Dog, and Mom.)

Cape Fur - Eek rescues a cute little pink bunny from a storm, only to discover that he's really a huge, tattooed psycho bunny from hell with plans to do away with the family and frame Eek for his crimes. Another episode not to be missed.

Eek vs. the Flying Saucers - When an alien invader abducts Annabelle (with much difficulty), Eek stows away on a space capsule to rescue her, not knowing that the capsule is doomed to crash into a nuclear weapons stockpile when it returns to Earth. Monkeynaut #1: Phil Hartman. (I: Shardy the Magical Dancing Piece of Glass.)

Halloweek - When separated from J.B. and Wendy Elizabeth while trick or treating, Eek meets Cryptie, a cute little ghost tourist who's looking for his family. Little do they know their respected loved ones have been kidnapped (or ghostnapped) by a beautiful but evil witch.

Whining Pirates of Tortuga - After being freed by Sharkey, Eek entertains the neighborhood kittens with a tale of his kittenhood adventure on the high seas helping a band of grousing pirates find treasure. Watch for the pirate named "Peg."

Eek's International Adventure - On route to Uncle Vic's potato farm with Mom and the kids, Eek is mistaken for a secret agent called "the Cat" by Sasha, a beautiful enemy spy who falls in love with him. She leads him to "the Brain," a disembodied evil mastermind out for revenge. (I: Sasha.)

Hawaiieek 5-0 - Annabelle's wish for more "admirers" comes to nightmarish life when she gets sucked down the drain of her filthy swimming pool and winds up on a South Seas island where she is worshipped as the Goddess Annabolla. Meanwhile, Eek and intrepid sea explorer Jacques LaDuck fend off Sharkey to make a rescue attempt. (I: Jacques LaDuck.)

Great Balls of Fur - When rock 'n roll legend and cat food pitchman Melvis fakes his own death, his shifty manager convinces Eek to impersonate him to please "the King's" many fans (including Annabelle). (I: Elmo Elk.)

The Eekcedental Tourist - When Wendy Elizabeth's geography grades need improving, Mom takes the family on a cross-country trip to discover America while she spouts off some hysterical misinformation. Eek gets left behind at their first stop and tracks the family station wagon from Washington DC to the Golden Gate Bridge. Elmo Elk: Savage Steve Holland.

It's a Wonderful 9 Lives - In this touching Christmas story, told completely in rhyme, Eek recovers a package dropped from Santa's sled and sets out to deliver the parcel to an orphan, stopping along the way to bring holiday cheer to a lost family of dachshunds and a pig who's scheduled to be a nasty farmer's Christmas dinner. In gratitude, Santa spans the globe to give Eek the best Christmas present ever.

The Eeksterminator - Eek gives Wendy Elizabeth a Squishy Bearz termite farm for her birthday, which becomes a nightmare for everyone involved when the glass breaks and a pair of hungry spiders menace the hapless termites. The lone escapee, Termie, asks Eek for help. Meanwhile, Mom spies Termie and calls a wimpy exterminator who dons a cyborg suit, which strangely makes him speak with a European accent. **Judith Reboy**

Toon CD Reviews

Tex Avery Cartoons
(Milan 7313835635-2)

In the tradition of The Carl Stalling Project, this is a collection of music by Scott Bradley from six of Tex Avery's MGM offerings: *Cell Bound; Little Johnny Jet;TV of Tomorrow; Three Little Pups; Deputy Droopy;* and *Dragalong Droopy*. While well-intentioned, this rather short offering lacks the charm of its Warner Bros. cousin. Bradley

somehow fails to present the finesse that Stalling did, despite the quite capable performance of the MGM orchestra. The music seldom varies its volume or tempo, and is surprisingly unmemorable. Or maybe I'm just not the Bradley fan.

Awkwardly-written liner notes contribute little to the package, paying about three times more attention to Avery than to Bradley. On the plus side, the recordings are quite clear, making them worth a listen from Bradley fans, even if dialogue and effects remain on most of the cuts. Bottom line: don't waste your time.

The Raymond Scott Project
(Stash ST-CD-543)

Now here's a CD with style! As we all know, Warner Bros. cartoon composer Carl Stalling just loved "quoting" both well-known and obscure pieces in his patchwork-quilt style of composing. Raymond Scott, a popular radio bandleader, was a personal favorite of Stalling's, and thus when Warners bought the rights to a pile of Scott music, it started showing up in Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies with wild abandon. *The Carl Stalling Project* illustrates his adaptations quite well, but now with this CD of never-before released material (all recorded in the late 30's) we can experience for ourselves where all these familiar themes came from.

Upon first playback, it's a bit jolting to the Warner Bros. fan, as perennial Stalling favorites like "Powerhouse" "Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals" are presented in their original form, sounding familiar but oh-so alien to an ear accustomed to Loonier versions. The music was transferred from (still living) Scott's personal collection of airchecks, rehearsal recordings, and the like, mostly from 78's. The sound quality therefore varies a bit, but the occasional pops and scratches do not detract from the lively performances. Stashed somewhere between swing and jazz, Scott's style is an energetic one, guaranteed to get yer toes a-tappin'. Just under 69 minutes of music is provided on 24 tracks, each one bouncily engaging (with the possible exception of "Confusion Among a Fleet of Taxicabs Upon Meeting With a Fare", which is nonetheless an interesting study of cacophony). Extensive, informative and well-written liner notes, too. If you'd like to hear a bit of it before you take the plunge, try *The Ren and Stimpy Show*, which has used music from this very CD on several occasions. Bottom line: a must for fans of Stalling or lovers of old band music; worth a try to the vaguely interested. Half a point lost due to sound quality, which, given today's technology, could probably have been cleaned up a little better. **Jay Pennington**

The Score Card So Far: A Quick Review of the Cartoon Network

So under the guise of justifying the latest rate increase, the local cable company has started carrying The Cartoon Network. Initially, I was overjoyed. Then, I started watching. Now, I'm just frustrated.

I thoroughly understand why The Cartoon Network uses its Hanna-Barbera library so heavily during prime viewing times...they own the characters. There are now almost two generations of television viewers who've not seen the H-B product of twenty and thirty years ago. I have to remind myself my six year-old nephew Matthew has never seen Huckleberry Hound, Quickdraw McGraw, Magilla Gorilla or Dastardly and Muttley stopping that pigeon, and maybe, just maybe, he might like them.

By showing these elderly kidvid offerings, the folks at The Cartoon Network undoubtedly hope to develop merchandising markets for these characters. To a geezer such as myself, it's a hideous thought that somebody could actually see Yakky Doodle or Touche Turtle (not to mention all those derivative H-B superheroes such as Bird Man) as viable commercial assets.

Naturally I would like to see are the black and white Fleischer Popeye shorts, the early Warner Brothers material and the lesser-known MGM stuff. They run some of this material late at night, since they assume it will appeal to a more adult audience, and since these shorts have far less-money making potential. They obviously can't license characters they don't own, such as Popeye and the Warner Brothers crowd.

What I really miss at The Cartoon Network is the kind of sensibility which typified TNT in its first few years. The programmers there ran thematic evenings which gave film fans the opportunity seeing an evening of Val Lewton horror movies or Buster Keaton's sound features, for instance. Someone at TNT understood both the commercial demands of cable television and the desire of the fans. That's seems to be lacking at the Cartoon Network. They have a Bugs and Daffy block, but they run a Popeye in the middle of it! They have a Droppy block, and they run a Tom and Jerry!

If they need a programming decision-maker at The Cartoon Network who is a historian or at least knowledgeable fan, I know where they can find one (and I work cheap.)

Oh well, it's better than nothing, and contrary to the tone of the preceding few paragraphs, I'll keep watching with hope in my heart. I just pray my nephew doesn't get to like *Dastardly and Muttley*. **GMD**

NEW ISSUE OF PLATEAU

The new issue of *Plateau*, an international quarterly bulletin on animated films, features a history of Spanish animation. For more information, contact Greet Halsberghe, Bondgenotenstraat 52, B-1190 Brussel Belgium.

NEW STAR ON THE CARTOON NETWORK

The Cartoon Network has announced that Moxy, television's first real-time cartoon characters, made his public debut live as the host of *The Great International Toon-In*, on Nov. 26 on six different Turner Broadcasting networks.

Moxy will star in *The Moxy Pirate Show* later this year. The concept behind the show is that Moxy is the janitor at the Cartoon Network, and has assembled his own broadcast studio, allowing him the opportunity to "break into" the cable network's programming.

Moxy is heralded as a new kind of animated cartoon character. Described as "real-time animation," the production team behind Moxy (San Francisco-based Colossal Pictures) uses a combination of new

Moxy, the Cartoon Network's new star. (SM © 1993 Cartoon Network)

technology to achieve the effect. A puppeteer is outfitted with sensors that map out the motion of his arms, hands, head and feet. Meanwhile, a computer animator operates a control panel that drives other aspects of his motion. Bobcat Goldthwait, the voice of Moxy, control the character's mouth movements through a synchronization program that translates his voice simultaneously into motion.

The new technology is heralded as both time and cost-efficient, and will allow a possibility for interaction between the Moxy character. If broadcast live, Moxy could, for example, call a viewer and have a discussion.

GMD

Beavis & Butt-Head ™ & © 1993 MTV Networks Inc.

Waldorf's Toon Tavern

by mark hurley

GREAT! THE SEASON OF CLAYMATION CHARACTERS RUNNING RAMPANT WITH US TOONS.
FROSTY, RUDOLPH, AND SMURFS, ALL INTERMINGLING.
I JUST HOPE THERE'S NO TROUBLE... YEAH, RIGHT.
CRASH!
DAVY!!
HEY YOU KIDS! STOP USING GOLIATH AS A PIÑATA!!
DAVY?
ARRH!

U.S. Renditions - From Page 17

Napton relates. "We write character profiles of each of the characters, which includes an analysis of their voice and how they sound. The Japanese-speaking production people (including Ken Iyadomi) listen, and interpret the inflections and things that we would miss because we don't speak Japanese. We relay that to the English voice actors. They also listen to the Japanese performance and have the option to listen to it as they're actually doing their own performance. But most of them have gotten so used to it that they don't do that as much, anymore."

The production is then mixed by sound engineer Les Claypool of Magnitude 8 Productions, integrating the English track with the original music and effects.

"Then we go to a post-production place called 525 Post, and edit on the logos, and run the sound through digital EQ, and sweeten it up, then send it to the duplicator and release it. Sounds easy, but it takes a long time," Napton says.

"*Macross* was produced completely on one-inch digital video tape, professional tape, which is known as D-2. We're duplicating from the D-2 master. The half-inch commercial tapes are one generation away from the digital source. So, the quality is going to be really, really good for the home consumer.

"The sound will be hi-fi. When we go to edit our logo on in the English titles, we run the sound through a Digital EQ to enhance the quality. Les Claypool is an exceptional engineer and he made sure it was the best it could possibly be," Napton says.

"We're trying to get ahead on preparing the episodes. *Orguss* has thirty-five episodes, and that's going to be a lot of work, and we're hoping to have all that done by late 1993 or early '94. But it's going to take at least that long, because there's seventeen volumes. Basically, we're looking at having about three or four tapes out from one given series a year.

Macross II is a six-episode set of made-for-home videos released simultaneously in the U.S. and Japan. U.S. Renditions packaged the serial as two-episodes-per-tape, with Volume One released last July, Volume Two last November, and Volume Three later this year, after Tara Releasing distributes *Macross II* as a feature film (a compilation of all six episodes) in exclusive engagements.

"The production of the dubbed tapes has been the most amazing amount of work I've ever done in my life," Napton says. It's just been an amazing mental and physical toll. But the work we've done is good; I think we can do it even better. So, I'm really happy to be involved with it. It's the beginning of a lot more material coming over through our company and through L.A. Hero, and I hope the fans enjoy it."

Bob Miller is a professional animator who has contributed to ANIMATO! in the past.

Milestone Release From Page 15

orange, and the puppy decides to get her one. His experiences make up the rest of the film, and while the first half is conventionally sentimental, the second is genuinely surreal. Many people may be familiar with the second half of the film as that is the part that has been excerpted under titles such as *The Devil's Party*. With really no reason, our puppy hero finds himself at a party presided over a doll in the shape of a devil. At the party, walking, talking vegetables, other dolls, and toys, try to pick each other up in a sequence with a strong sexual atmosphere. It's easy to think the filmmaker had two ideas which he wanted to combine. *The Mascot* may be very odd, but it's visually fascinating and a film not easily forgotten.

Beautifully transferred and accompanied with new effective musical scores, these three Milestone tapes are important additions to any serious animation library.

Copyright 1993 Disney characters

Sub-Mariner
From Page 40

TV feels that any animated cartoon is automatically for the six year-old age group, and thus they insist on strict simplicity. This immediately eliminates everything that is Marvel. We just gave up on them, and since they have gone off on their own to do all new stories. Personally, I was very dissatisfied with the way our heroes were handled."

By the time Grantray-Lawrence had decided to animate the adventures of the Sub-Mariner, the character had survived nearly 30 years of impossible perils, yet the one thing he was unable to overcome was weak animation and poor stories. The series effectively sunk the animated career of the monarch of the seas. It has been over 25 years since the series premiered, and while there have been many attempts to bring the Marvel heroes to animated stardom, in all that time the Sub-Mariner has been allowed to disappear beneath the waves, never to bother surface dweller television viewers ever again.

Jim Korkis is a well-known animation historian and co-author of several books on the subject. He is currently working on a book about animated superheroes.

Harley Quinn
From Page 37

which the inmates escape and put Batman on trial for creating them), Harley gets put on the witness stand in Arkham Asylum," Dini said. "And it is revealed that Harley had once been a doctor at Arkham."

"That's going to be kind of fun," Timm agreed. "Everyone will think we're following the comic."

A great deal of anticipation has been generated by the imminent release of *Mad Love*. Many comic retailers expect it to be one of the sleeper hits of the season. Dini and Timm couldn't be happier about that.

And, in keeping with Harley's original desire to be a pop psychologist, they have some advice for *Animato!* readers.

"Buy our book!" they said in unison. "Buy lots of copies! Keep them in print forever! Buy ten copies and don't read them! Keep them in bags! Buy ten copies and read them! Buy ten copies and give them to your friends!"

Fans of the series should take their advice. The issue looks terrific. Besides, Paul Dini and Bruce Timm know Harley better than anyone else, and you don't want Harley mad at you....

Christopher Kindred is a journalist based in Las Vegas. He'd like to thank Blake and PJ, the evil overlords of Dungeon Comics, Mike Green and David Bash, and Chris Kuminecz in Las Vegas, and At Warner Brothers, Paul Dini, Ed Harrison, Chris Naylor, Arleen Sorkin, Bruce W. Timm, and Jeff Walker.

Waldorf's Toon Tavern

by mark hurley

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From The Inkwell

Beavis and Butt-Head continues a satiric tradition dating back to Jonathan Swift and his blistering "A Modest Proposal." The new MTV favorite is a jet black comedy commenting on the shallowness of our popular culture. Its quickly-produced crude animation and reliance on its sound track to carry most of the action lends the show a sort of immediacy. Since MTV is using *B&B* almost in the same capacity as some of its vee jays, this immediacy is crucial for the animated pair's success. Commercially, *B&B* are proceeding along the track laid out by *Ren and Stimpy*. By outraging parents with the use of gross-out humor, both shows almost automatically engage children and teens and assure a market for a variety of merchandising.

Unlike *Ren and Stimpy*, *B&B* purports to satirize real life. Try substitute teaching in any high school for a few days, and the characterizations on *B&B* appear frighteningly life-like. Gallows humor is always fairly difficult to pull off, and part of the success of black comedy hinges on a receptive audience. If the audience understands what they are about to witness is a dark comedy, they have a better time interpreting a writer's intent. To make black comedy work, the audience must have an ethical, intellectual and cultural background, and for MTV viewers, therein lies the rub.

In "A Modest Proposal," Swift offered a solution to the problem of Irish poverty; the wealthy English could buy and eat unwanted Irish babies. Swift noted the English had might as well do this as they had consumed the souls of the infants' parents. People in England unaware of the conditions in Ireland thought he was serious, and condemned him without reading his entire essay. Without the right context, the point was lost.

I don't doubt if Mike Judge should share the same artistic space with Jonathan Swift, (no offense, Mike) but his vision of two "typical" MTV viewers can definitely be seen as a criticism of the callow rock and roll subculture which his sponsor, MTV, has help develop in the last decade.

While I might be grimly amused by B&B's antics, much of their audience see them to be a comically hip read on the "X Generation." I see Judge characterizing these guys as complete wastes of protoplasm, but I'm afraid the audience for which this show is intended sees them as cool goofs.

Too many of the people who watch the show see something which re-enforces aspects of current youth attitude...kids who hate their parents for their material excesses, but who can't wait to go to the mall for the newest grunge CD; kids for whom casual and random violence is a personality condition they accept rather than control; kids who quickly dismiss something with two words "it sucks," because they haven't received an acceptance cue from their peers; kids who are cynical without reasons. The show's depiction of the tunnel-vision of what's cool and what's not is adopted by some as a personal strategy for easy intolerance and store-bought skepticism.

I'm not surprised the cheap shocks of B&B have both garnered an audience and mainstream media attention. The mainstream press loves this kind of story, especially since the death of a child has been linked with the show. The medium of animation, for better or worse, has been judged as primarily a children's medium for the past forty years, and while the content of *B&B* may be no more severe than satires in other media, the content is sensationalized by being animated.

Censorship, though, is not the answer. The popularity of B&B indicates situations in American society that could (and should) never be solved through the oppression of information and ideas.

I suppose my feelings come down to the following statement: I can tolerate (barely) the common denominator standards of an industry that wishes to convince children that the artless repetition of slapstick in something such as *Dastardly and Muttley* is actually entertaining, but I can not support a show which re-enforces destructive attitudes under the guise of cool entertainment. MTV spends a fair amount of time and lip service to the pursuit of positive thinking through its "Free Your Mind" campaign. Obviously, they're not paying any attention to their own PSAs.

***

Many thanks to Kevin Clement of Chillercon for all his help and hospitality. If you enjoy horror, fantasy, science fiction or exploitation films, Chillercon should be listed on your convention schedule. We'll be back there in May!

Also, thanks to Roseann Caputo who invited us to participate in WishCon III here in our hometown of Springfield. Patrick, Steve Bissette and I made up the non-*Star Trek* guest list (along with *Lost In Space*'s Dr. Smith himself, Jonathan Harris).

***

Speaking of thanks... After a year of re-building **ANIMATO!**, Patrick and I would like to acknowledge the contributors, readers, advertisers, and distributors who have given us the necessary support to breathe life back into this publication. A special thanks to goes to our wives who've been 100 percent behind this effort, to Gene Gumbs for his layout skills, and to friends such as Steve Bissette, Myron Waldman, Scott MacQueen, Tim and Donna Lucas, and Mark Martin whose advice and talents have been indispensable. Thank you all.

Mike

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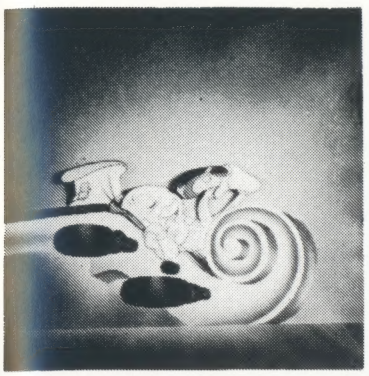

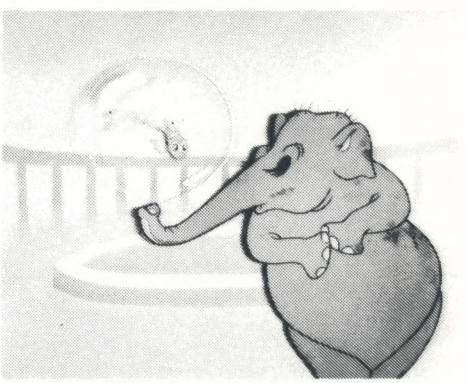
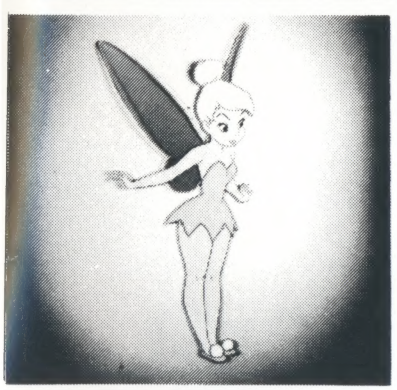

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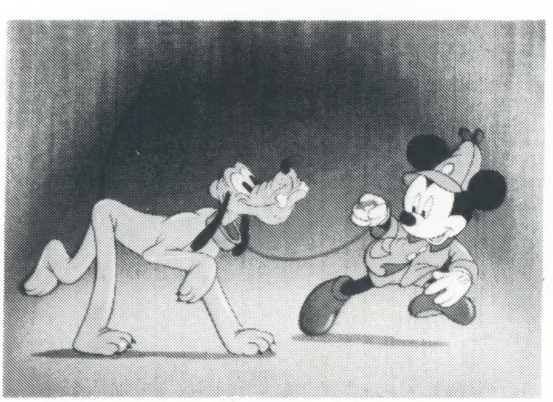

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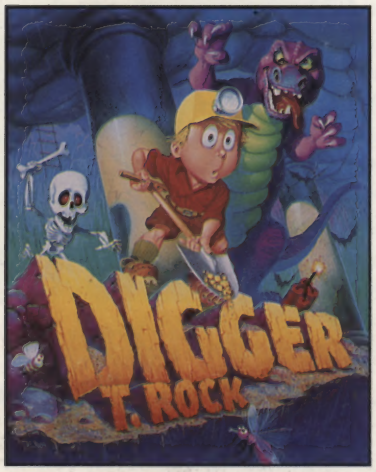

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